

HUMOR BY IAN FRAZIER / WHY ECO-EFFICIENCY ISN'T ENOUGH

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The Atlantic Monthly

OCTOBER 1998

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What constitutes "force"?
The law's answers remain murky.

Unwanted Sex

by Stephen Schulhofer



THE SHIPS OF PORT REVEL

by John McPhee

THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THE CLINTON ECONOMY

by John E. Schwarz

MISUNDERSTANDING GERSHWIN

by David Schiff

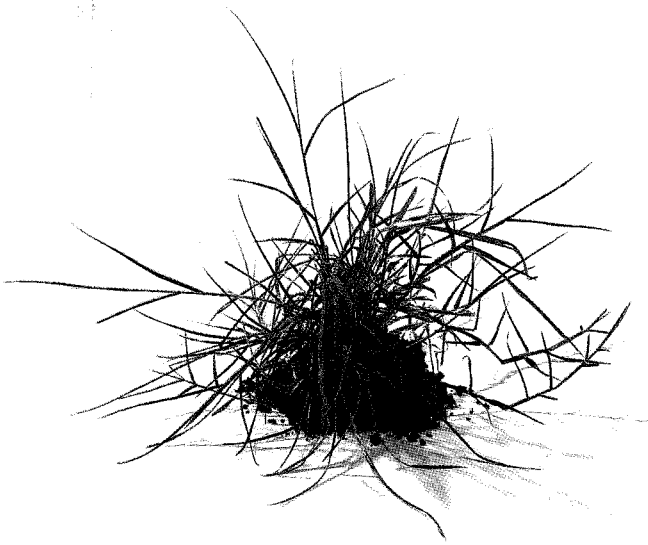
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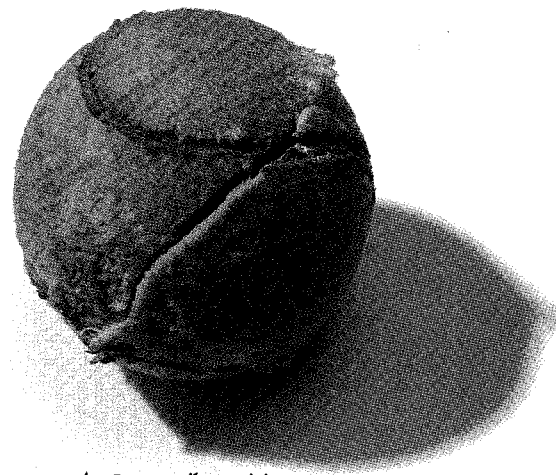
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Ambrosia franseria
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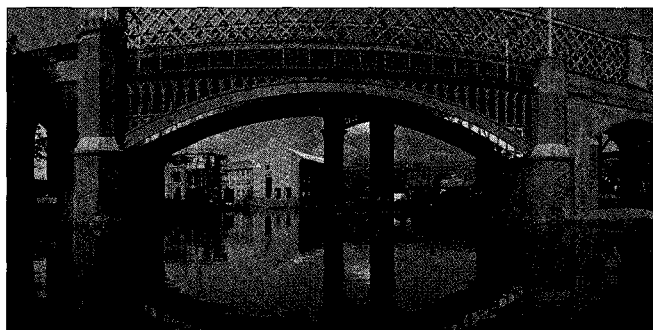
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HONDA
Thinking.



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WILLIAM McDonough and Michael Braungart, the authors of "The Next Industrial Revolution," in this month's issue, have mounted a crusade to reinvent the way we run our industries and manufacture our products. They are not visionary amateurs. Both men have long records of real-world experience designing products and systems that are environmentally effective and also thrive in a profit-making world. And while both continue to pursue independent careers, since 1995 they have been principals in a joint enterprise called McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry.

Michael Braungart is a native of Germany and a trained chemist whose early career involved examining the effects of industrial chemicals, under the auspices of Greenpeace International. Braungart was the kind of activist who would chain himself to smokestacks to protest pollution. He eventually came to rely more on his scientific skills. In 1984 Braungart devised a method of bleaching paper with oxygen rather than chlorine—a process that produces no carcinogenic dioxins. Initially greeted with skepticism by paper-mill operators, this process is now commonly employed in the United States and Europe. In 1987 Braungart helped to develop the first refrigera-

tor to run without chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). That same year he established a scientific consulting firm, the Environmental Protection Encouragement Agency.

Braungart met William McDonough, an architect, at the opening reception of the EPA's New York office, in 1991. McDonough's firm, William McDonough + Partners, had

already earned a reputation for innovative ecological design. His 1985 headquarters for the Environmental Defense Fund, in New York City, features a tree-lined interior boulevard and interior offices illuminated by daylight. His 1997 office complex for Gap, Inc., in San Bruno, California, includes an insulating roof made of grass and a raised floor that allows the building to be flushed and cooled with air at night.

In McDonough and Braungart's view, eco-effectiveness is a task for everyone—corporate executives, politicians, ordinary workers—but above all, perhaps, for designers. To them falls the job of interpreting what McDonough has called "the first signals of human intention." And they must be "mindful rather than mindless about the way the world works"—in both its industrial and its natural state. —THE EDITORS



Braungart and McDonough

NICOLE DOMENICI

CONTRIBUTORS

Teresa Cader ("The Odds") is the author of two collections of poems: *Guests* (1991) and *The Paper Wasp*, to be published next month.

Ivan Chermayeff (cover art) is a designer, a painter, and an illustrator who has received awards from the American Institute of Graphic Arts and the Society of Illustrators.

Ian Frazier ("Journalism Today") is the author of *Family* (1994) and *Coyote v. Acme* (1996).

David Harvey ("University, Inc.") is a professor of geography at Johns Hopkins University and the author of *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (1996).

Erika Krouse ("My Weddings") is a writer who lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Thomas Lux ("The Man Into Whose Yard . . .") teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College. His most recent book is *New and Selected Poems 1975–1995* (1997).

William McDonough ("The Next Industrial Revolution") is the Dean and Edison Professor of Architecture at the University of Virginia. He and **Michael Braungart** are the founders of McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry, in Charlottesville, Virginia.

John McPhee ("The Ships of Port Rev-el") teaches writing at Princeton University. He is the author of *Looking for a Ship* (1990) and *Annals of the Former World*, which was published last summer.

W. S. Merwin ("Before the Flood") has won many awards, including the 1998 Ruth Lily Poetry Prize. His epic poem, *The Folding Cliffs*, will be published this month.

James T. Patterson ("The Enemy Within"), a professor of history at Brown University, is the author of *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974*, which won the 1997 Bancroft Prize for History.

G. Franco Romagnoli ("A Mediterranean Mix") wrote eight cookbooks with his late wife, Margaret, including

The New Romagnolis' Table (1988) and *Zuppa* (1996).

David Schiff ("Misunderstanding Gershwin") is a composer and a professor of music at Reed College, in Portland, Oregon.

Eric Schlosser ("Saturday Night at the Hacienda") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*.

Stephen Schulhofer ("Unwanted Sex") is the Julius Kreeger Professor of Law and Criminology at the University of Chicago. His article in this issue will appear in somewhat different form in his book *Unwanted Sex: The Culture of Intimidation and the Failure of Law*, to be published by Harvard University Press next month.

John E. Schwarz ("The Hidden Side of the Clinton Economy") is the author of *Illusions of Opportunity: The American Dream in Question* (1997).

Martin P. Wattenberg ("Should Election Day Be a Holiday?") is the author of *The Decline of American Political Parties, 1952–1996* (1998).

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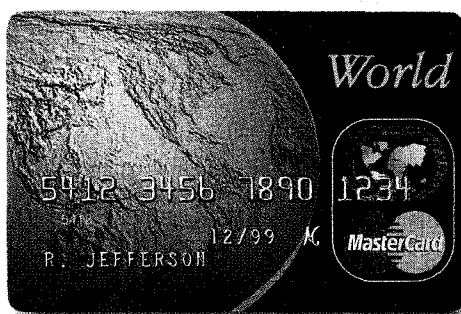
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LETTERS

America's Future

Robert D. Kaplan's piece about Tucson, Arizona ("Travels Into America's Future," July *Atlantic*), was hostile in tone and content.

Tucson, with less than three percent unemployment, was portrayed as indifferent and uncaring, writhing at the bottom of the economic barrel. In fact next year we will struggle to find people to fill the jobs available. Over the past two years the city poured \$1.5 million into job training to supplement federal funds. Over the next five years \$15 million will be spent to enhance city neighborhoods. The city allocates \$1.2 million a year for free after-school and summer recreation programs to provide added supervision for our children. The total budget for children's programs, more than \$11 million, also includes summer job training for youths, library services, recreational sports, and special services for working parents.

National surveys include Tucson as a great place to live, and we are in the top one percent of U.S. cities in addressing the problems of domestic violence and among only fourteen American cities that offer first-rate companies in all four performing arts—symphony, opera, drama, and ballet.

When I was asked to cite Tucson's most pressing problem, I suggested that it might be easy to tag water, transportation, or crime, but I believe that the disparity of income, with 20 percent living below the poverty line, is most daunting. We are well aware of our serious shortcomings.

George Miller

Mayor
Tucson, Ariz.

I just read Robert Kaplan's drive-by journalism about Tucson and Nogales and was shocked. I hardly think that a bus ride from Mexico City to Nogales qualifies him to make sweeping (and racist) assumptions about Mexican society, architecture, and character.

As for the Tucson portion of the article, Kaplan apparently never interviewed the real leaders and visionaries of the city. Instead he quoted idiots like Roy Drachman and David K. Taylor, and filled the piece with misinformation. Contrary to Drachman's assertion, downtown is neither dead nor dangerous and has one of the best restaurants in the United States—Janos, created by Janos Wilder, who invented nouveau Southwest cuisine. There are more than twenty art galleries downtown, and not a single one caters to Western art.

Although the article was supposedly about the melding of Mexican and American cultures in Tucson, the only source of Mexican ancestry quoted is a supposed ex-gang member who doesn't even know that Barrio Hollywood and El Rio are on the west side of town, not the south side. As for the retired cop, Arturo Carrillo Strong (it's Carrillo—not Carillo, as you misspelled it), to print his statements that fancy wrought iron on a Mexican's house means that it was built with drug money, and that all tire shops on the south side are fronts for drug operations, is so irresponsible that I wouldn't expect to find it in the *National Enquirer*.

Finally, Kaplan quoted at great length Emil Franzi, Jeff Smith, and John C. Scott, all certified nuts and local embarrassments. If Kaplan really wanted to discuss the relationship between Tucson and Mexico, why did he not interview easily accessible locals such as Raul Grijalva, a visionary politician who has long represented the south side; Salomon Baldenegro, who led the Chicano protest movement here in the 1970s and is now the head of the Mexican-American Studies Department at the University of Arizona; Alfredo C. Marquez, a U.S. district judge born and raised in a nearby mining town, who has been dealing with drug and immigration cases from the border for the past twenty years; Lina S. Rodriguez, another local from a nearby community who grew up in a working

When did every place
start to feel like the same place?

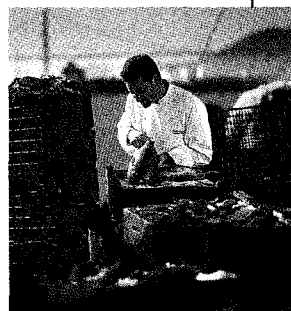


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family to become one of our most respected local judges; and Joel Valdez, another local guy, who used to be the city manager and knows the problems of Tucson hands-on, not from some theoretical perch in the foothills?

Sean Bruner
Tucson, Ariz.

In "Travels Into America's Future," Robert Kaplan refers to the land dispute between the Navajo and Hopi tribes, stating, "It is the federal government that to this day keeps the peace between many Indian tribes."

In fact the federal government is responsible for the disputes that occur between the Navajo and the Hopi. The government designated the original Hopi and Navajo boundaries, which placed the Hopi reservation in the middle of the Navajo reservation. Many Navajo families have lived on what is technically Hopi land for generations. These people were undoubtedly unaware of the boundaries that were drawn by politicians far off in Washington (reservation lines were drawn and changed several times from the 1860s to the 1930s). In the 1950s coal was discovered beneath the Hopi reservation in the area populated by many Navajo families, and the federal government was prompted to enforce the exact demarcation between the Navajo and Hopi lines. Congressional legislation in 1974 authorized the removal of some 10,000 Navajos from land known to have been worshipped as their mother for generations. This decision, motivated by hopes of mineral wealth, is what has caused much of the dispute between the two tribes.

Christa Robertson
Tuba City, Ariz.

Robert D. Kaplan replies:

I do not believe that George Miller read my piece in context. My piece depicted Tucson as an example of America's bifurcation into two societies—one global and upper-middle-class and increasingly free of the nation-state's constraints, as emblemized by Tucson's Catalina foothills; and the second stagnant and unable to compete in a global economy, as emblemized by Tucson's South Side. These two Americas talk less and less to each other, as evinced by the lack of contact I found between the South Side and

the Catalina foothills. A glance at Tucson's downtown shows undeniably that it is hollowed out, as are downtowns across America. And many public spaces in Tucson are empty even in the cool and comfortable late-autumn weather. Though Mayor Miller's figures add texture to my own reporting, they are but footnotes to the continent-straddling forces I portrayed. The total amount of money he cites for alleviating the problems to which I alluded makes up about four percent of Tucson's city budget (\$724.7 million) for 1998–1999. The low unemployment figure is not as significant as Miller suggests, because many of the jobs emerging are in the low-paying service sector. Also, the transient nature of Tucson's population—which I wrote about—means that many people without jobs simply leave Tucson, keeping unemployment in check. Federal and municipal job-training funds, apparently, will not encourage multinationals to hire locally rather than recruiting more-talented people overseas—people who will become American citizens in the process.

Tucson, as I reported after interviewing a wide variety of its citizens, comprises a dynamic, multiracial, and transnational hub on one hand, and a poorer half melding with the problems of Mexico on the other. The detailed statistical portrait I drew was of a city with one of America's higher crime indexes and a median household income that has actually decreased over the past quarter century, even as, thanks to a global economy, untold wealth is on display in the foothills. Then there is the problem of water, which the development-oriented culture of Tucson, like previous civilizations in the Southwest that have come and gone, has yet to face up to.

Sean Bruner feels that a traveler has no right to comment on a place he passes through. But that is the essence of travel writing: to notice the obvious—those characteristic, often uncomfortable first impressions that locals often miss precisely because of their familiarity and the psychological need to have a good opinion of the place one inhabits. I visited Tucson twice: once during my initial journey and once for backup reporting in late 1996. Concerning his comment on Barrio Hollywood, perhaps he did not notice that South Side was capitalized in

the article: it is the local name of an area that is actually in southwestern Tucson. I apologize if I spelled someone's name with one "r" rather than two. Mr. Bruner's other remarks seem to me a bit hot-tempered. He calls one of the Southwest's leading real-estate developers, Roy Drachman, and one of Tucson's leading planners, David K. Taylor, "idiots." He calls two well-known local radio personalities and experienced political operatives, Emil Franzi and John C. Scott, "certified nuts." He belittles a former gang member of Mexican ancestry who has succeeded in climbing his way out of trouble.

The federal government's historical involvement in the Hopi-Navajo dispute is covered in my book *An Empire Wilderness*, from which July's cover story was excerpted. Still, were there no federal government, the uneasy peace between Navajos and Hopis could easily be threatened.

Social Security

Dean Baker's "Nine Misconceptions About Social Security" (July *Atlantic*) corrects some of those misconceptions but introduces arguments about the future of Social Security that merit further examination.

Baker says that "if Social Security benefits are left unchanged," the necessary growth in Social Security tax rates will be modest, because growth in workers' incomes will fund the increases in tax revenues necessitated by the increase in the ratio of retirees to workers. It is counter to historical experience, however, to expect that Social Security benefits per retiree will be left "unchanged" at their current levels rather than rising along with average wages. A democratic society is unlikely to freeze the absolute value of the benefits of the retired population as the incomes of the working population grow; it is more likely to raise them in step with the average level of workers' wages. Baker also implies that U.S. workers' incomes will grow faster in the future than they have over the past quarter century. The historical record makes me doubt that they will.

The Social Security payroll-tax rate necessary for the support of the retired population is determined by the multi-

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plication of two ratios: the ratio of average retirees' benefits to average workers' wages, and the ratio of recipient retirees to taxpaying workers. To take a simplified example close to our current situation: Social Security benefits per retiree of \$10,000 and an average worker income of \$25,000 yield a ratio of 40 percent, and one retiree for every 3.3 workers yields a ratio of 30 percent; the resulting tax rate on wages is 12 percent (0.4×0.3). To finance current benefit levels with current demographics, the Social Security tax rate has risen from one percent at the inception of the program, in 1935, to the present level of 12.4 percent of wages (producing a slight surplus that goes into the Social Security Trust Fund).

Baker's assumption of no change in average Social Security benefits per retiree implies that several decades in the future—when the average worker is earning more than \$40,000 a year—we will still be spending \$10,000 a year per Social Security retiree. Highly improbable! If the present ratio of retiree's benefits to worker's wages were maintained at 40 percent, then the increase in the ratio of workers to retirees from 1:3.3 to 1:2 (Baker's numbers) would increase the required tax rate on wages from 12 percent to 20 percent (0.4×0.5), an increase of eight percent—more than double the 3.6 percent Baker posits.

Further, Baker restricts his analysis to Social Security. Medicare expenditures per retiree are currently about half those for Social Security benefits and growing much more rapidly than Social Security. Social Security and Medicare taxes are currently 15.3 percent of payroll and would increase to more than 25 percent even if current levels of Medicare expenditure were to be maintained—because of the effect of the projected rise in the median age of the Medicare-eligible retired population. As payroll taxes to fund transfer payments rise, we could reasonably expect a decrease in participation rates (not to mention payroll-tax evasion), which would exacerbate the funding problem.

Baker notes (correctly) that it is the dependency rate—the ratio of dependent children and retirees per worker—that determines the tax burden on workers for education and retirement spending. He notes that this ratio was higher thirty

years ago than it is now, and that a lower birth rate would reduce the number of children supported by each worker. He fails to note that we are increasing the number of years each child spends in school and increasing real expenditures per student, so that the tax rates necessary to fund education are increasing simultaneously with the burgeoning cohort of retirees.

Dean Baker has articulately exposed some myths about Social Security, the national debt, and the benefits of privatizing retirement. However, demythologizing bad arguments does not alter realities. The likely continuation of current policies for Social Security and Medicare expenditures (plus additional education spending) will combine with demography to produce a mathematical necessity for an increase in the tax burden to support the longer-lived and more affluent retired population and to educate the labor force that will be carrying the tax burdens in the next century.

Gordon Bjork
Claremont, Calif.

Dean Baker argues that the Social Security Trust Fund is not an accounting fiction—that the bonds held by the fund are every bit as real and valuable as those sold to the public. If the trust fund and the Treasury were separate, unrelated entities, rather than parts of the same system, this argument would be unassailable. But we all know this is not true: in 1968 President Lyndon Johnson “unified” the federal budget by consolidating receipts from the payroll tax that finances Social Security with all other federal revenues.

One may ask, Why, if all money over and above current pension needs is being spent for other governmental operations, go through the charade of placing Treasury IOUs in a fund? Why not face facts and admit the obvious—that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go operation? How did the trust-fund idea come about anyway?

As the ideas for Social Security were being formulated, in early 1935, a debate raged as to whether to emulate the European plan—pay as you go, with a small reserve to smooth fluctuations of income and outgo—or to build something uniquely American on the model of annuity insurance. A government annuity

would involve “full reserves”—meaning that the contributions over the years would be sufficient to pay for the retirement years of the retiree.

True annuity status was never achieved. What evolved was sold to the public as being “like” an annuity, not as “being” one. Actually, Social Security is more like a private company retirement plan—or a union pension plan—in which the employee pays into the company-operated fund in return for promised benefits upon retirement. Like company pension plans of the past, it is subject to the whims (and possible abuse) of management (meaning Congress). Being regulated by Congress, Social Security benefits have always been greater than would have been possible with a private insurance annuity based on prevailing life expectancies and funds accumulated at the time.

The Social Security Trust Fund is no more than a way of keeping track of how much more today's workers have contributed to Social Security than has been paid out in pensions. It is, in fact, an accounting fiction.

Willard A. Redmond
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Dean Baker replies:

On the fictionality of the Social Security Trust Fund, let's look behind the semantics and examine the reality. The Social Security tax is a regressive tax on workers. Most of the federal government's general revenue comes from individual and corporate income taxes, which fall primarily on the wealthy. Over the past fifteen years the Social Security tax has deliberately been set higher than necessary in order to help defray the costs of the Baby Boomers' retirement. This surplus has been lent to the government, with the idea that the fund will be repaid with interest from general revenue. There is absolutely nothing improper about this transaction. In fact, nothing else could legally have been done with this surplus.

The problem arises if the fund is not repaid from general revenue. This means defaulting on the debt to the nation's workers. More specifically, it means a multi-trillion-dollar gift to the wealthy individuals and corporations who would otherwise be providing most of the needed tax revenue. I can understand why the

wealthy would argue that the trust fund is an accounting fiction. If I borrowed a thousand dollars from my neighbor and gave him a promissory note, I might try to persuade him that it was worthless and he should throw it away. But he would be a fool if he followed my advice.

Advice & Consent

Having written a lot of other people's books, I'd like to put in a word for those of us on the laboring side of "The Writing Life," by Ian Frazier (July *Atlantic*). I'm speaking about ghosts, as-told-tos, small-type "with"s, unacknowledged sharers of noms de plume, and the rest of us who linger in the stables where writers of great expectations and small change wait in hopes of being harnessed to a bombshell of a book and exploding into the financial stratosphere. Let me tell you, Mr. Frazier: it's great.

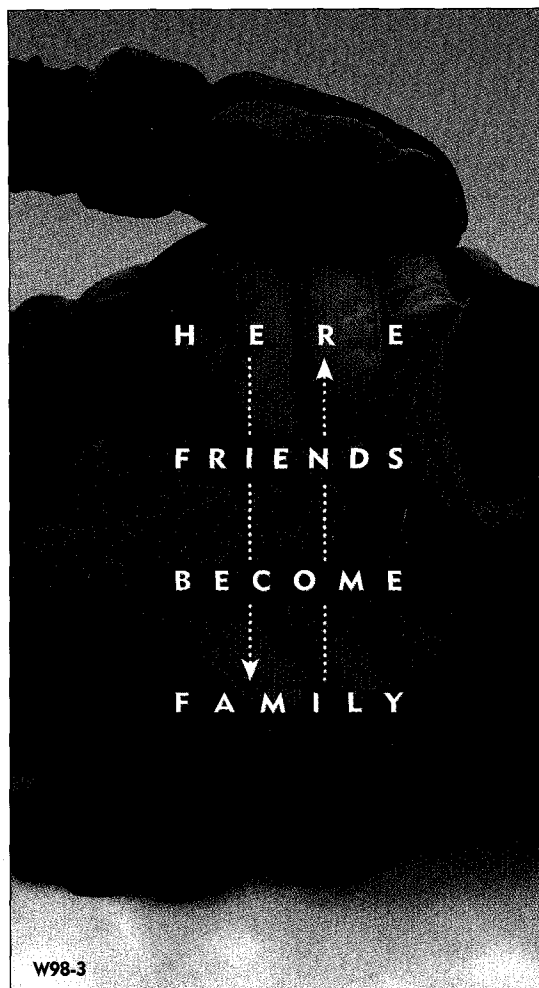
I used to be a real writer myself—the kind who nibbles the ends of pencils, has bags under her eyes, smokes and drinks and wears the haunted look of one pursued by words ("magnanimous"! "labio-palatial"! "metempsychotically"!). I never made much money, got good reviews at first, later got hardly any notice, eventually stopped being published. I was miserable, impoverished. Then I turned to hustling—offered my prose for rent, by the hour, overnight, incognito, fetishistic, you name it, I'll do it. Made boodles, bought cars, clothes, and attention, traveled all over the world. It was great. Would I trade all that for being a writer? You bet.

Kathrin Perutz
Great Neck, N.Y.

Iwould like to point out an error in the article "Sculptures in Leather" (July *Atlantic*), by Jane and Michael Stern. Sheridan, Wyoming, is not in the Big Horn Basin, which is on the other side of the Big Horn Mountains, west of Sheridan. Sheridan is on the western flank of the Powder River Basin.

I am a petroleum geologist and a former resident of Casper and Laramie. I am also an occasional leather-carving hobbyist, and I am truly in awe of the talent depicted in the article.

Donald W. Lane
Houston, Texas



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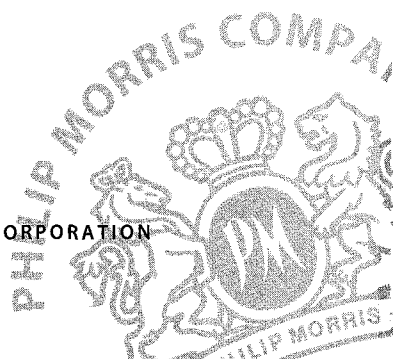
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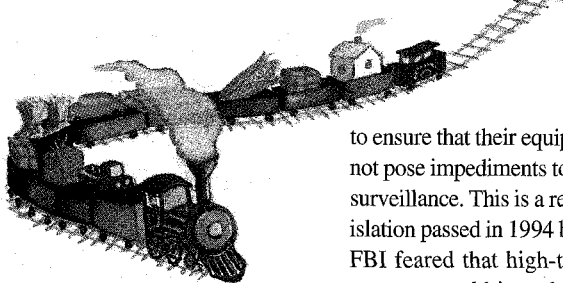
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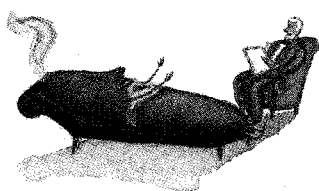
Demographics

October begins the busiest time of year for moving cargo by rail. The peak results primarily from the distribution demands of the harvest season, the autumn rolling-out of new models of cars, and the shipping of consumer goods for the holiday shopping season. Trains are also busy transporting construction materials to warehouses whose stock has been depleted by summer building. Although the miles of track over which trains travel have declined to about 140,000 from more than 250,000 early in the century, trains are hauling more cargo than ever, owing to increases in demand and efficiency. So-called global positioning systems, which are now being tested, are likely to further advance efficiency and to bolster safety. Potentially able to electronically pinpoint trains' positions and automatically engage their brakes to avoid collisions, these systems may enable more trains to run simultaneously on the same tracks, and at faster average speeds.

Government

October 1: The National Directory of New Hires, a system mandated by the sweeping 1996 federal welfare law, takes effect today. It calls for all employers to submit the names and Social Security numbers of new employees to law-enforcement agencies, who will use the information to track down those who are delinquent in child-support payments. 25: Authorized wiretapping gets a boost today, the deadline for telephone companies

to ensure that their equipment does not pose impediments to electronic surveillance. This is a result of legislation passed in 1994 because the FBI feared that high-tech phone systems would impede its ability to monitor phone conversations. Congress has authorized \$500 million to compensate phone companies for the cost of modifications. Opponents of the act have ranged from phone companies, which argue that their costs will exceed the allocated amount, to civil-liberties groups, who contend that the new technology could let the Bureau more easily listen in on calls without first securing warrants.

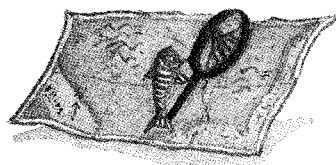


Arts & Letters

October 15: A major exhibit on the life and influence of Sigmund Freud opens today at the Library of Congress, which holds the largest collection of Freud artifacts in the world. The exhibit is opening two years later than planned: it was canceled in its original form in part because of vigorous protests from historians, psychologists, feminists, and Freud's granddaughter. These parties argued, among other things, that the exhibit was too favorable toward Freud and could validate practices that are now obsolete. Although budgetary reasons were given for the postponement, in the meantime the exhibit has been modified to address these concerns. The exhibit will contain approximately 170 items, including the death mask of "Wolf Man," one of Freud's most famous patients, and a 1935 letter in which the doctor allowed that homosexuality was "nothing to be ashamed of." After closing in Washington in January, the exhibit will travel to New York and Vienna.

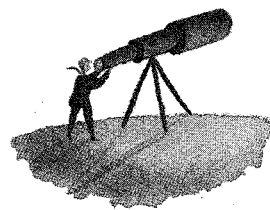
Health & Safety

Starting this month, according to a new Department of Transportation regulation, all airlines whose flights enter or leave the United States must keep a log containing each U.S. passenger's full name and emergency contact, and must provide this log to the State Department within three hours of a crash or other catastrophe. This system was devised in part by the DOT's Task Force on Assistance to Families of Aviation Disasters; it is meant to speed notification of victims' families. Airlines have often been reluctant to release manifests promptly after disasters, partly because of uncertainty about the accuracy of their lists. The DOT task force has also asked Congress to consider extending from 30 to 45 days the moratorium lawyers must observe before approaching victims' families about their interest in suing.



Environment

October 1: Today states and Native American tribes will issue reports to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture on the health of the watersheds—the areas of land that feed streams or stream systems—under their jurisdiction, and must rank them in terms of restoration needs. The reports represent a dramatic shift in the fight against water pollution, away from the practice of concentrating on the largest sources and most obvious sites of pollution and toward a focus on the health of aquatic ecosystems in their entirety. They will help to determine the allocation of the funds provided by the Clean Water and Watershed Restoration Budget Initiative.

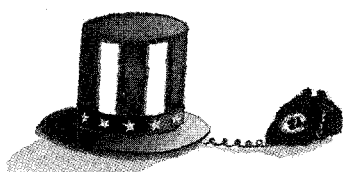


The Skies

October 4: The Moon passes close to brilliant Jupiter. 5: Full Moon, also known this month as the Hunter's Moon and the Dying Grass Moon. 6: The bright bluish star Regulus, in the constellation Leo, lies very near Mars. 7: The gibbous Moon passes close to Saturn. 21: The Orionid meteor shower peaks tonight; viewing should be best after midnight. 25: At 2:00 A.M. Daylight Saving Time ends; turn clocks back and enjoy an extra hour of sleep.

125 Years Ago

Charles Dawson Shanly, writing in the October, 1873, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The notion that people must be happy because they have put off to sea in a boat, is . . . no more capable than a sieve of containing water. Let us take a sail-boat. . . . If there is no wind, the idle flapping of the sails against the mast is a sound exceedingly irritating. . . . Should there be a breeze, a great deal of merriment is affected by the holiday people 'out in a boat.' They shout; they sing. . . . The feminine element shrieks prettily, and poses itself for protecting arms. Presently a sea is shipped; then another, and another, and then everybody whose hat hasn't been blown off . . . uses it vigorously to bale out the boat. From that moment all is either affectation or profanity. The salt water has ruined the lobster salad, and depression broods over what really might have been a pleasure party if it hadn't been donkey enough to go to sea in a boat."





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The Hidden Side of the Clinton Economy

The official government measures of unemployment and poverty disguise the fact that millions of Americans can't make a decent living

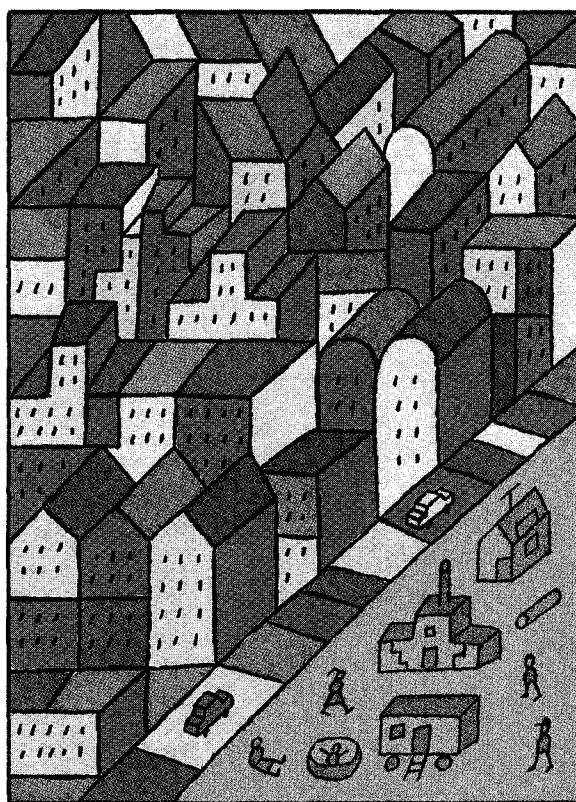
A TRIUMPHAL view dominates coverage of the longest peacetime recovery in U.S. history. The numbers tell the story: the lowest yearly unemployment in a quarter century, rising profits, a budget in balance, low interest rates, even lower inflation, and declining numbers of Americans classified as poor. All this is cause for rational exuberance. Allen Sinai, a noted economic analyst, has likened the times to a "worker heaven." But just as the buoyant Reagan economy of the 1980s masked seas of red ink, so the booming Clinton economy of the 1990s masks bad news. Relying on dubious measures that tell us good news, we have ignored the deepening erosion of the American Dream.

On the first Friday of every month the federal government announces the unemployment rate—lately to much fanfare. A low rate signifies that American workers are able to take care of themselves, and that labor markets are tight and strong—or so it is generally presumed. But is this really so? To most people the objective of employment is to earn a living. One's work is instrumental in achieving independence, self-sufficiency, and what some call competency. To the Founders, independence and competency meant that a person was able to earn a decent living through work. James Madison said that the happiest and most secure society was that in which the most citizens were independent. No republic could remain untroubled, he believed, if large numbers of citizens were eco-

nomically marginalized. The self-evident truth that Thomas Jefferson proclaimed in his draft of the Declaration of Independence was that "all men are created equal *and independent*."

The principle of basic equality realized through economic independence inspired the Homestead Act. Enacted in 1862, it provided an opportunity for independence through grants of land sufficient to sustain a family to all who were willing to settle and work the land. Eighty-six years earlier Jefferson had proposed that the government of Virginia grant fifty acres of publicly owned land to any propertyless citizen willing to farm it. That everyone who is willing to work hard can make a decent living and get ahead is the American Dream.

The state of the American Dream, however, eludes measurement by official statistics that count workers as employed if they hold *any* job—whether it is ten or forty hours a week; temporary, seasonal, or permanent; paying \$7.00 or \$70 an hour. In 1996 just over four million workers who were employed part-time said that they wanted to work full-time but could not find full-time jobs. Nearly 10 million worked full-time year-round but for less than \$7.00 an hour. These two groups of workers, all of them counted as employed, amount to twice the seven million workers who held no job and were classified as unemployed. Together they total 21 million workers, not seven million.



by John E. Schwarz

Illustrations by Maris Bishofs

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Economists treat the unemployment rate as an indicator of aggregate pressure on the economy. But if many workers are underemployed, low unemployment does not signify a strong labor market that is likely to force up wages and hence generate inflation. That workers take and keep jobs paying menial wages is generally a mark of an aggregate *undersupply* of employment.

What does low unemployment mean for the wages of the average American worker? From 1992 to 1998 the unemployment rate dropped by more than a third, yet the real hourly compensation of American workers remained virtually unchanged. Far from threatening to ignite inflation, workers' real wage increases have failed even to keep up with improvements in their productivity. Indeed, since 1973 the hourly compensation of workers would have to have grown by 24 percent more than it has (amounting to an increase in wages for the average full-time worker of more than \$6,000 a year) just to match the gains that have taken place in worker productivity.

Opinion surveys asked a sample of Americans to estimate the rate of unemployment in 1996, when it stood at about 5.3 percent—close to what many economists consider to be "full employment." The respondents' answers put the unemployment rate at about 20 percent, adding to concern among economists about the sorry state of public awareness about the economy. But perhaps the public was thinking of employment as the ability to be independent and earn a decent living. If so, the estimate of 20 percent of Americans without employment more accurately captured the real picture.

The unemployment rate is not the only gravely misleading statistic. Above the official poverty line, astonishingly, lie nearly half of all poor American families.

Historically, the poverty line established the household income required to afford basic necessities by contemporary norms. It was never intended to identify an income sufficient simply to stay alive. As a result the first federal poverty line was tied to the spending of the average American family, starting with the pro-

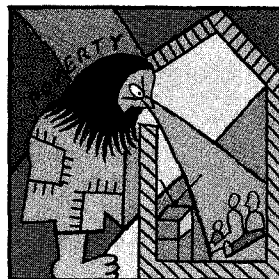
portion of the family budget spent on food. In 1955, the year that was used as a basis for the first calculation, the average American family spent about a third of its budget on food—whereas low-income families spent half or more. The formulation of the poverty line incorporated the smallest amount of money that a household would need to spend on food in order to provide adequate nutrition. This became known as the thrifty food budget. The government multiplied it by approximately three in order to arrive at the poverty line. In 1955 the poverty line for a family of four would have been about \$2,700 a year. In 1964, when the government first officially reported the poverty line, it was adjusted, for a rise in food prices, to a bit under \$3,200. It has been adjusted for inflation each year since.

Adjusting only for inflation, however, moored the poverty line thereafter to what households could afford on a 1955 budget. For example, the poverty line in 1994 (about \$15,100 for a family of four) amounted, simply, to the number of 1994 dollars necessary to achieve the same material standard that \$2,700 achieved in 1955. The problem with this standard is no quibble. Many of the expenses necessary for minimally decent living in most areas of the country today were not part of the lives of many Americans in the early 1950s. Even though food prices have risen since 1955 at practically the same rate as general inflation, food today accounts for barely a sixth of the average family budget, rather than a third. Con-

tinuing to use 1994 figures, let's reformulate the poverty line in the same way it was originally intended: given the Department of Agriculture's thrifty food budget of \$4,576 for a family of four, and the proportion of the average family

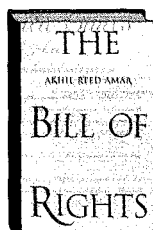
budget spent on food (about a sixth), the poverty line in 1994 should have been about \$26,000—not \$15,100.

Even this amount would provide no more than the barest necessities. To the thrifty food budget of \$4,576 add the cost of a two-bedroom apartment for four people that meets the government's definition of a low-cost rental unit, including the minimum charge for utilities and local telephone service: \$512 a month, or

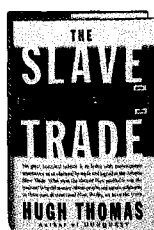


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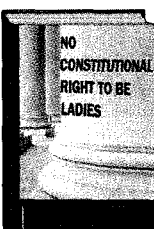
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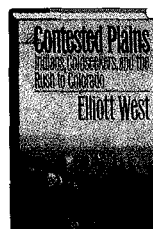
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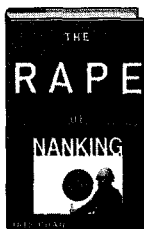
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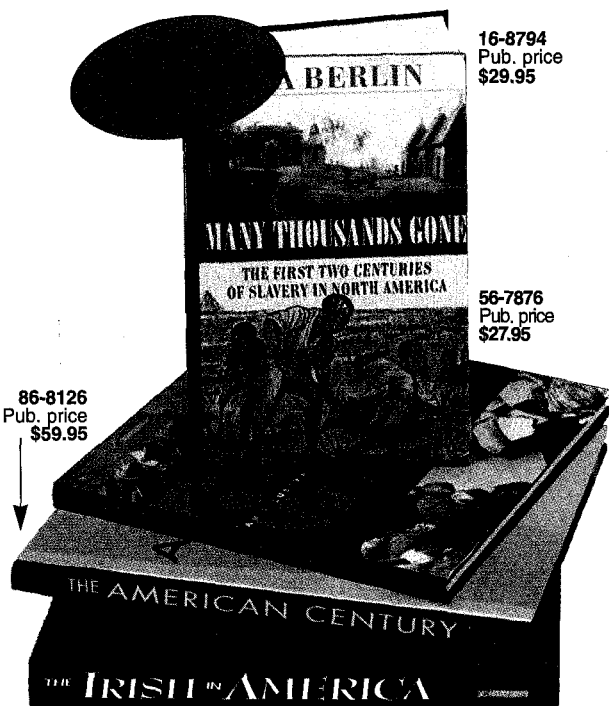
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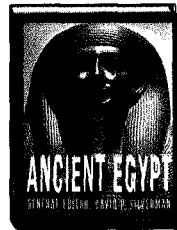


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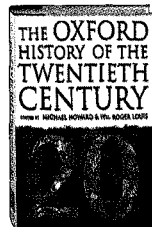
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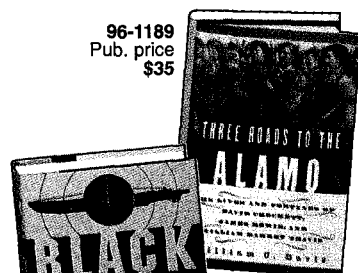
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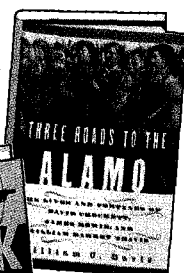
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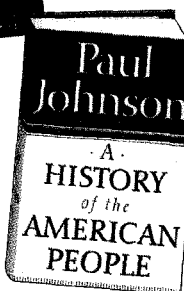
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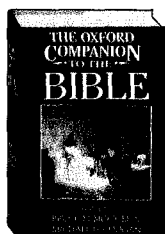
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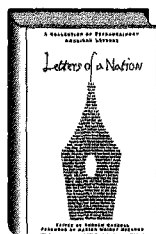
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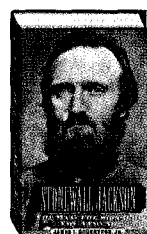
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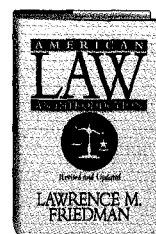
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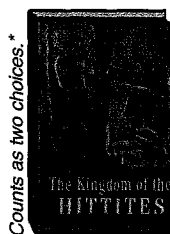
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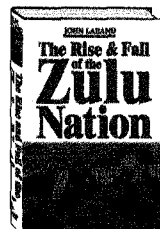


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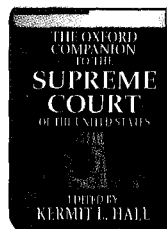


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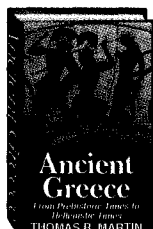
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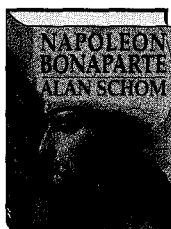
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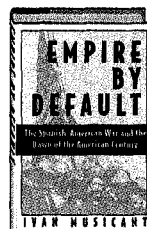
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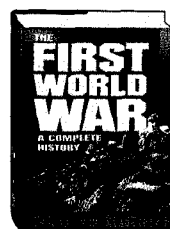
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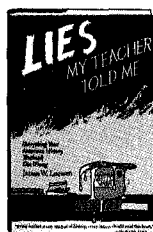
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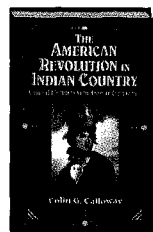
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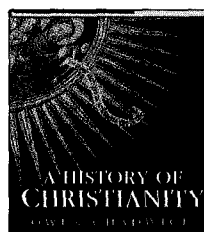
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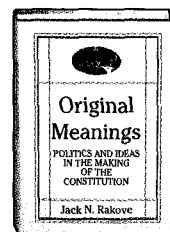
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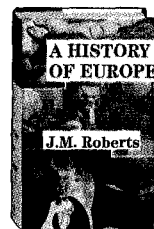
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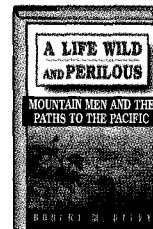
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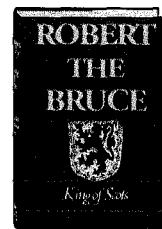
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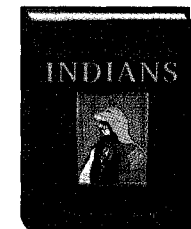
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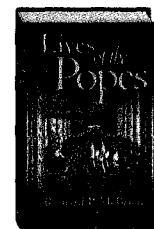
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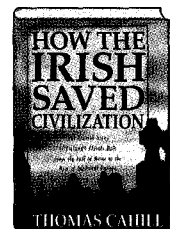
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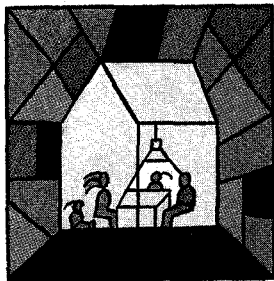
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\$6,144 a year. Add the cost of operating, insuring, and keeping in working repair a single ten-year-old car, along with a little money for public transportation: \$3,700 a year. Add no more than \$250 for each family member for clothing; \$2,000 for all medical, pharmaceutical, and dental expenses; personal and household expenses of \$3,900 for everything from toothpaste to household repairs; and, finally, federal income, Social Security, and state income taxes totaling \$3,270. These frugal expenditures come to nearly \$25,000—with no provision for entertainment, vacations, child care, emergencies, or savings. No wonder respondents to a 1994 Roper survey thought that about \$25,000 was the lowest income required for a family of four just to get by.

In 1955 the official poverty-line income for a family of four would have stood at 59 percent of the median income for all married-couple families; by 1994 it had dropped to 33 percent. In other words, whereas the poverty line originally measured the poor, it has come to measure the very poor. Imagine a family of four living on \$15,100 (almost 40 percent less than the \$25,000 budget just described) trying to find decent housing with no more than about \$300 a month for rent and utilities combined, having no more than \$52 a week to spend on food for four people—sixty-three cents a meal per family member.

Instead of measuring the very poor, the poverty line should be restored to its intended function—defining the level above which a household that spends carefully can afford necessities within current norms. Practicing the work ethic should enable people to achieve this standard of living. It describes the promise of the American Dream. In 1994 there were more than 65 million Americans living in households unable to attain this standard. But the federal government reported only 38 million as poor. Since 1972, by the poverty measure as it was originally intended, the proportion of Americans who are poor has grown from approximately 17 percent to more than 25 percent, despite the sizable growth over that period in the proportion of all adults who have joined the labor force and taken jobs.



The connection in the everyday world between practice of the work ethic and reward has broken down, virtually unnoticed, during the past two generations. In the early 1950s the minimum wage paid about 110 percent of the amount required for a household with two full-time workers and children to get along. Full-time work at the minimum wage brought entry into the bottom of the middle class.

By the 1970s the minimum wage for two workers had dropped to 90 percent of the necessary income. Now it provides less than 70 percent. Today more than 12 million full-time year-round workers are paid wages beneath those needed to support a minimally decent standard of

living for households with children. Two thirds of workers who start at subpar wages are unable to lift themselves to a decent wage even after a decade of continuous full-time work. Likewise, many millions of other workers in part-time jobs because they can't find full-time work also fall short.

During the past half century a new notion of the American Dream has taken hold among us. The belief that anyone who is willing to work and persevere can live decently has allowed us to assume that people with insufficient incomes are not deserving—perhaps not even if they work hard. In place of the precept that people who practice the work ethic will succeed, the nation has moved close to accepting a paradigm of meritocracy, on all rungs of the income ladder. However intuitively appealing, meritocracy has a social Darwinist side. Building on the idea of rewarding ability, talent, and knowledge, it defends or at the very least excuses the existence of low-paying jobs on the grounds that people who cannot make the grade don't deserve a decent wage. This philosophy is exclusive, not inclusive. Whereas everybody can develop a strong moral character, not everybody has the ability, talent, cleverness, or knowledge that the market may demand. False official measures hide the reality that for large and increasing numbers of Americans, the economic foundation necessary to support a family, the morality of individual responsibility, and the work ethic is disappearing. ☾

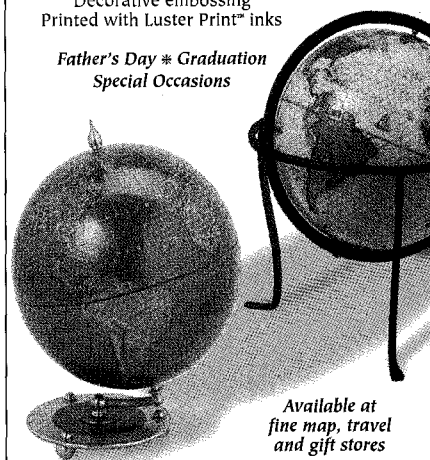
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Saturday Night at the Hacienda

Once a city of dying mills, Manchester, England, has been revived by the music and nightclub industries. But has it merely traded one "dark Satanic" economy for another?

WE hit speeds of more than 110 miles per hour on the road between Sheffield and Manchester, weaving among three lanes as a light rain fell. Eddy Rhead was sober and meticulous behind the wheel. He politely flashed his high beams before passing, and downshifted smoothly on curves. His navy-blue T-shirt warned, NEW YORK CITY FIRE

DEPARTMENT: KEEP 200 FEET BACK. The

other cars on the motorway seemed to be stuck in molasses. Tom Wainwright sat in the front passenger seat and casually looked back at me, explaining the various door policies at local nightclubs. Wainwright was a popular disc jockey based in Manchester; Rhead was his roadie for the evening; and the rented Ford was being pushed near its oper-

ational limits to reach the next gig in time. We were headed for the Hacienda, a club as notorious in the United Kingdom as Studio 54 once was in the United States. A group of Wainwright's fans, who had watched him DJ at a Sheffield club earlier in the evening, now struggled to keep up with us. They were crammed into a small Vauxhall that fell behind, vanished for long stretches, and then suddenly reappeared in our rearview mirror. Rhead and Wainwright saw nothing unusual in the mist and the mad rush and the blur of scenery flying past us, like a video played on fast forward. This was part of the routine. It was just another Saturday night in the north of England.

On the outskirts of Manchester we passed empty lots, abandoned factories,

warehouses with broken windows—an industrial wasteland punctuated by row after row of modest brick houses. There was more life downtown, amid the faded grandeur of massive Victorian buildings. Rhead slowed down considerably to avoid pedestrians, but ran a few red lights too, hitting Whitworth Street at twelve-thirty, right on time.

About twenty or thirty people stood in front of the Hacienda, hoping to get inside. They had come from all over the north, from Blackpool and Preston, from Bradford, Leeds, and Stoke-on-Trent, some of them driving for hours just to dance here tonight. The building was low and unexceptional. It had once served as a yacht warehouse. You could hear muffled bass notes through the brick walls, a dull, thumping four-four beat. Rhead removed cases of twelve-inch singles from the trunk and handed a couple to me. This was as far as he would go. Rhead wouldn't set foot in the Hacienda. It had been his hangout for years, a "brilliant" place, the best, nothing like it, but lately everything had changed. The club had a different feeling now, a much darker one; bad things were happening inside. Rhead said good-night and got back into the car. I turned and followed Wainwright, helping him carry the discs. The crowd parted for us, a bouncer opened the door, the calm of the street fell away, and we stepped into the maelstrom of a teenage party, hot and sweaty, with people dancing, strobe lights flashing, and music so loud it seemed to have acquired a physical presence—so loud that I could not only hear it but feel it, as though a stiff breeze were emanating from the speakers and somehow penetrating to the bone.

THE popular culture of Great Britain has long been torn between contradictory impulses, often symbolized by the rivalry between north and south, between a faith in the common people and a proud elitism, between an urban, working-class sensibility and one that cherishes tradition, rank, and the arcadian values of country life. At the moment, the north is ascendant. You can see its newfound prestige in the current mania for soccer stars, in the success of

by Eric Schlosser



Build a boat.

Someday I plan to: Teach someone to read. Run for city council.
Look up old college friends. Catch my limit of large-mouth bass.

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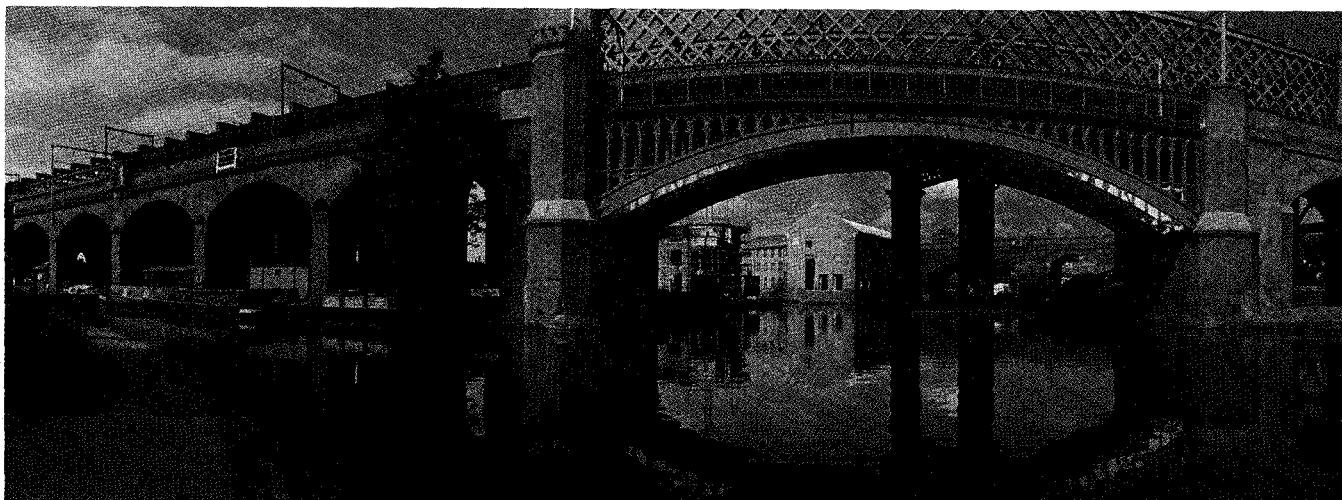


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From the Industrial Revolution's ashes: Castlefield Urban Heritage Park. Below, trendy venues emerge from the decay

films like *Trainspotting* and *The Full Monty*. Most of all, you can hear it in the music. The stale gentility of the Thatcher era has given way to a culture that is iconoclastic, often outrageous, and fed up with the trappings of hereditary privilege. The election of Tony Blair's Labour government only confirmed a change in popular attitudes that had been mounting for years. British youth culture has been exerting a sort of influence, both at home and overseas, that the United Kingdom has not enjoyed for thirty years. Laura Ashley prints and *Brideshead Revisited* nostalgia are long gone. There's a craving for the shock of the new, and middle-class kids in England are once again dressing down and dropping their aitches.

During the "beat boom" of the early 1960s, Liverpool was the trendsetter, home of the Beatles' "Mersey sound." For the past decade another northern city, Manchester, which though only thirty miles from Liverpool considers itself a world apart, has led the way in music, fashion, and graphic design. Both the rise of electronic dance music and the current revival of British rock-and-roll got their start in Manchester's clubs. In the summer of 1988 the city became a latter-day Haight-Ashbury, as young people from all over England and Europe flocked to a club scene, dubbed "Madchester," whose ground zero was the dance floor at the Hacienda. An urban center once famous for its factory system became renowned for its

nightlife, for the rock clubs, bars, and dance clubs opening in abandoned warehouses downtown.

Manchester's local government has encouraged this hip new image, hoping to create a postmodern, postindustrial



economy based largely on entertainment. But youth culture changes rapidly; trendy scenes can vanish overnight; and the drugs and violence that doomed Haight-Ashbury's brief reign now threaten to end Manchester's. The city today has a surreal, highly charged atmosphere. Its plight says a great deal about what has happened lately in the "other" England—the great northern industrial cities that rarely appear in British tourist brochures. Amid long-term unemployment and some of the worst urban poverty in Western Europe, the "dark Satanic" mills of Manchester deplored by Victorian social reformers are being turned into tapas bars and discos.

MANCHESTER was the world's first industrial city. The factories built here in the late eighteenth century used elaborate, innovative machines to make textiles out of the raw cotton picked by American slaves. The city became the industrial heart of the British Empire,



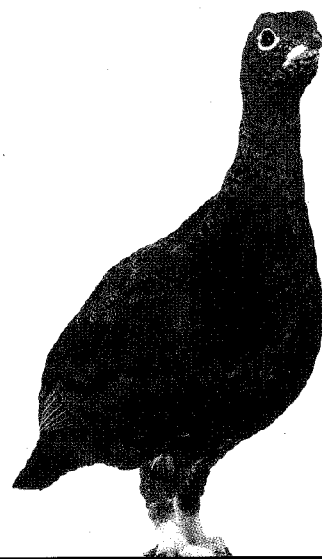


serving as a model of economic development and inspiring whole new political philosophies. From 1760 to 1871 Manchester's population increased more than twentyfold, as laborers arrived from the rest of England and from Ireland, Scotland, Italy, and Greece. The metropolis that arose stood in total contradiction to aristocratic values and a stable rural order, as self-made men earned great fortunes and the countryside of Lancashire was blanketed with railroads, factories, and towns. Manchester seemed to embody the best and the worst of the modern age. The free-trade movement, liberal economic theory, and the worship of the free market took root in Manchester during the 1830s, amid opposition to England's Corn Laws, regulations that favored agriculture. A decade later the city produced one of the fiercest critiques of such laissez-faire capitalism. After living in Manchester and observing the poverty of its workers, Friedrich Engels wrote *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, a book that supplied much of the empirical basis for Marxism. As the textile mills moved to the outskirts of town, huge warehouses came to dominate the city center—grandiose monuments to their owners' wealth, often built to resemble Renaissance palaces and surrounded by miles and miles of slums.

Manchester reached its industrial peak in the years before the First World War, eventually manufacturing automobiles, chemicals, and heavy machinery in addition to textiles. It has been in decline ever since. The rise of more-efficient competitors overseas, the effects of the Great Depression, heavy German bombing during the Second World War, and

the fall of the British Empire all took their toll. Warehouses, factories, and mines throughout Lancashire shut down. Manchester became a different sort of model, a harbinger of the de-industrialization that other great cities would endure. From 1921 to 1980 Manchester's population fell from about 800,000 to about 465,000. The Thatcher years were particularly devastating for the city, as government policies favored economic development in the Tory strongholds of the south—London, Cambridgeshire, and Surrey. During the first decade of Conservative rule 94 percent of the jobs lost in England were in the north, where state-owned industries were privatized and ruthlessly downsized. Despite its economic woes, Manchester had enjoyed nearly full employment of its male population perhaps as late as 1970. The combination of more factory closings and deep cuts in social spending left the city reeling. By April of 1982 its unemployment rate was 32 percent. The greater Manchester area (which has a population of about 2.5 million) lost almost a fifth of its manufacturing jobs during the 1980s, and more than 125,000 people moved away. The unemployment rate in some Manchester neighborhoods still exceeds 20 percent. According to Gabrielle Cox, the head of greater Manchester's Low Pay Unit, approximately half of the city's population qualifies for government housing benefits, which are a means-tested grant. Half of the city now lives in poverty.

THE misery and deprivation experienced in many of the United Kingdom's urban areas have at least one positive effect: they produce interesting

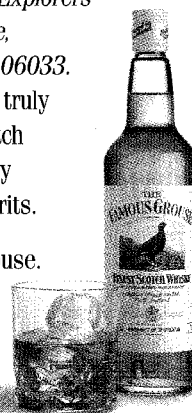


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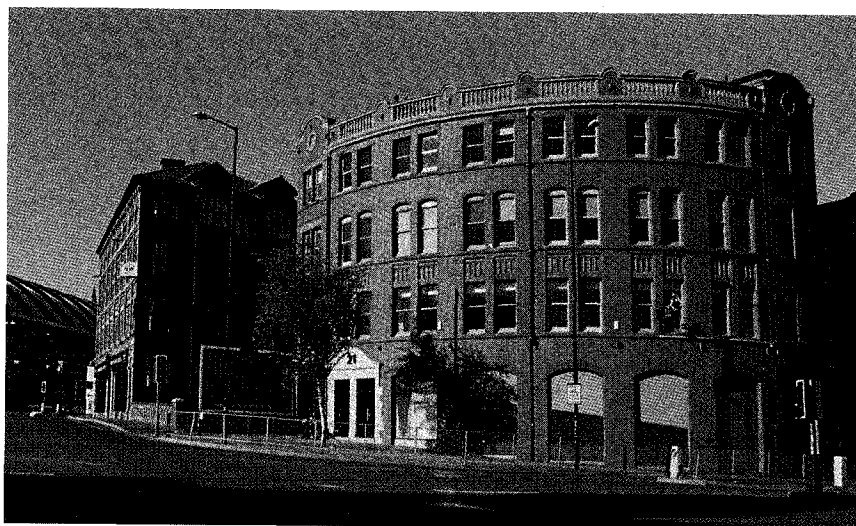
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The Hacienda nightclub; below, a 1990 poster for the nightclub by the designer Peter Saville

music. The pop charts in the UK are often dominated by performers from the inner city, from places like Manchester, Sheffield, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, and Belfast. The British talent for creating popular music is in many ways mysterious; the French, who are equally obsessed with African-American music, have long produced some of the world's worst rock-and-roll. It may be that many young people in Great Britain have felt not only a passion for African-American music—for the jazz, rap, hip-hop, funk, electro, Detroit techno, disco, and rhythm-and-blues that are the main influences on almost all pop music today—but also some affinity with its roots. Kids from the underclass in the United States and in the United Kingdom are often faced with similar choices. Music, crime, and professional sports seem to offer a way out, a quick means of escape from the dreariness of everyday life.

Manchester's emergence as a force in British popular music began during June and July of 1976, when the Sex Pistols played two gigs at the city's Lesser Free Trade Hall. The band's anger and on-stage anarchy had an energizing effect on the local music scene. After watching the Sex Pistols, Anthony H. Wilson, a young newscaster for Granada Television and the host of a late-night pop-music show, started to manage local bands and then formed an independent record company in Manchester. He named it Factory Records, in a nod to

the city's industrial past. Over the next few years the popularity of the local bands Joy Division and New Order allowed Factory Records to assume the kind of role in Manchester that Motown once played in Detroit.

Releases by Factory Records were distinguished by the strength not only of their music but also of their graphic design. Factory Records had an air of radical politics that was playful, ironic, and sometimes pretentious. At Cambridge University, Wilson had been introduced to the writings of the Situationist International, an anarchist movement, influenced by Dadaism and Surrealism, that guided the 1968 student uprisings in Paris. In 1981 Wilson and Rob Gretton, the manager of New Order, decided to open a downtown nightclub in Manchester modeled after clubs they'd recently visited in New York City—dark, cavernous places like Danceteria and Hurrah. They found a name for their club in a Situationist text, Ivan Chhtcheglov's *Formulary for a New Urbanism* (1953). In a somewhat obscure and absurdist tone, Chhtcheglov attacked the soulless, deadening quality of modern life and envisioned a whole new kind of city, one that was freed from industrialism and "set apart for free play." Great cities of the future would abandon the production of goods and "live largely off . . .

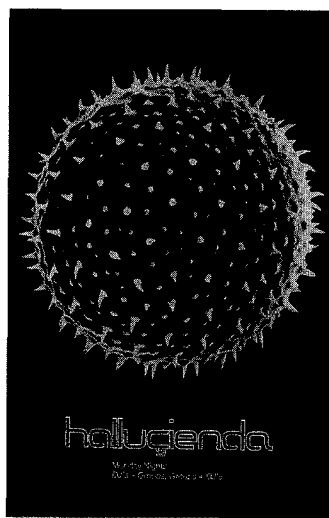
controlled tourism." This utopia was within reach, and he urged, "The hacienda must be built."

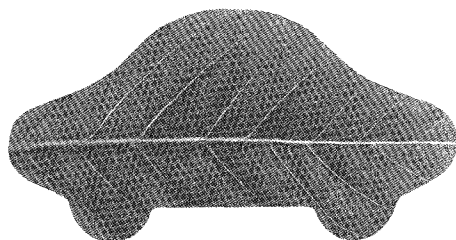
The Hacienda was one of the first British clubs to play acid-house; its DJs Mike Pickering and Graeme Park introduced the music to large, enthusiastic crowds. Acid-house sounded like sped-up disco fed through a computer and liberated from any song structure. It had first emerged in the gay discos of Chicago and New York, in palaces of hedonism like the Warehouse, the World, and the Paradise Garage, where the new music was championed by the DJs Frankie Knuckles and Larry Levan, among others. It was underground music, an upbeat and exuberant sound that reached Great Britain by way of the gay community and all-night dance clubs on the island of Ibiza. The early British raves—illegal parties with acid-house music—were held in empty warehouses and at large outdoor spaces off London's ring road, the M-25. The raves, which often boasted huge sound systems, attracted thousands of people in defiance of the law. Disco music had long been derided by punk and rock fans as the cheesy sound of conformity. But disco's electronic offshoot soon became the music of teenage rebellion, as British au-

thorities tried to crack down on the raves, staging raids and making arrests. Britain's tabloids warned parents about the dangers of acid-house music: this new sound was accompanied by a new drug.

In the United States, Ecstasy (the common nickname for the synthetic drug MDMA) gained notoriety for its alleged powers as an aphrodisiac, briefly becoming popular on col-

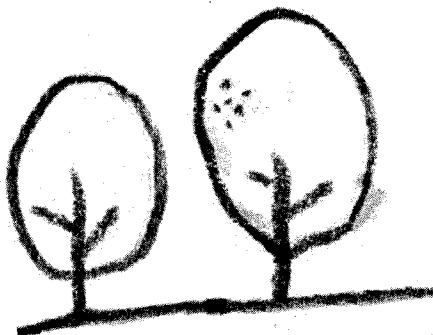
lege campuses during the 1980s. In Great Britain, Ecstasy became inextricably linked with acid-house and raves. The drug was sometimes described as a "psychedelic amphetamine"; it provided a speedy, dreamy sense of empathy and well-being, without hallucinations. Ecstasy and acid-house arrived in England at the same moment, and their popularity grew symbiotically, both of them





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seemingly uplifting, underground, and forbidden. Acid-house quickly became the soundtrack of choice for kids taking Ecstasy.

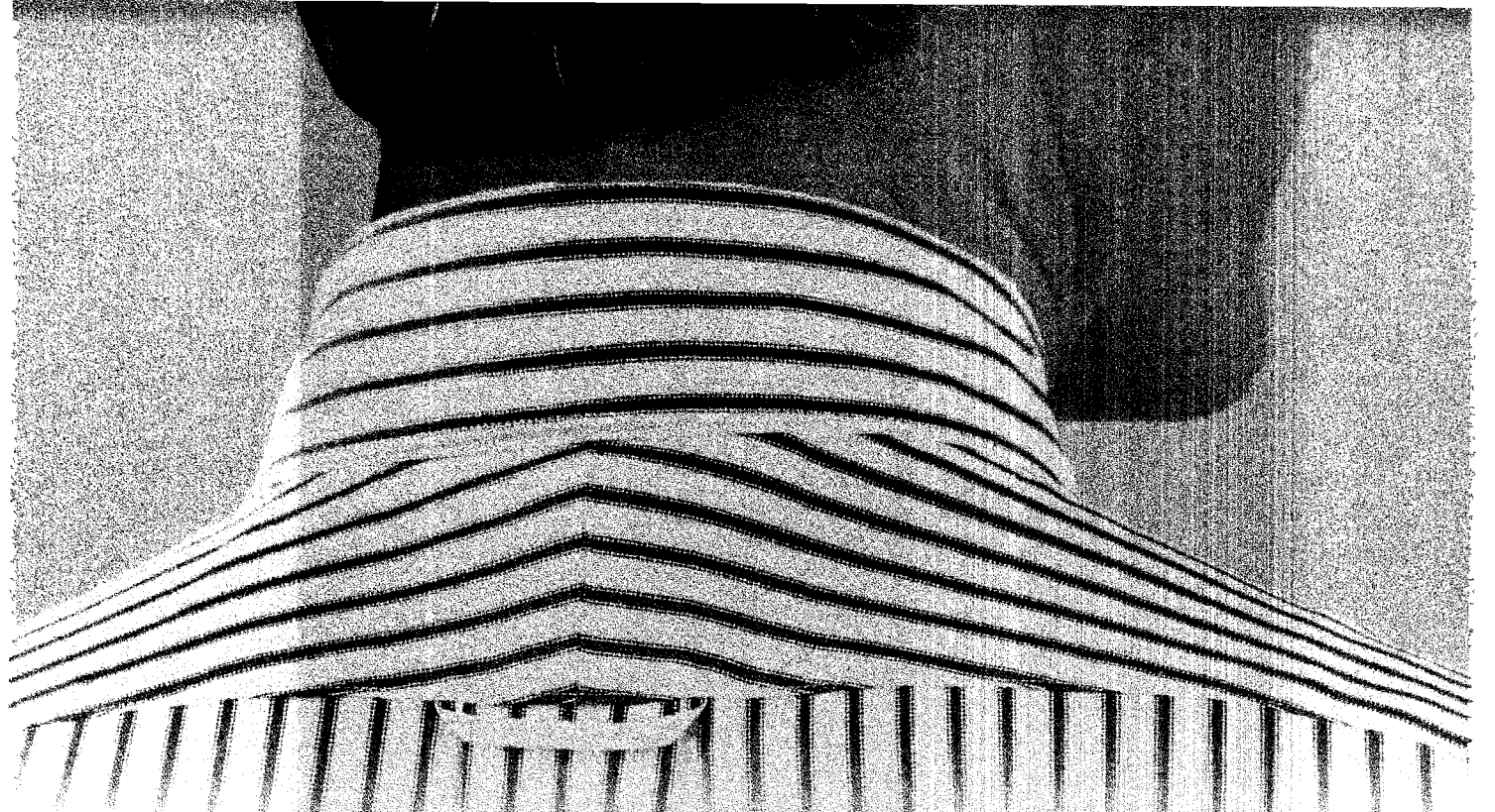
The summer of 1988, when acid-house and Ecstasy gained a foothold in Britain, was heralded as the "second summer of love." There was an outpouring of drug-fueled idealism and optimism. Manchester became a mecca for nightclubbers, and recordings by local bands such as New Order, A Guy Called Gerald, 808 State, and Happy Mondays helped to spread dance music throughout Great Britain and Western Europe. Attempts by the Conservative Party to stamp out rave culture had the opposite effect, facilitating its entry into the mainstream. The Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act of 1990, nicknamed "the acid-house bill," made it much riskier to put on raves without a license—and thereby encouraged the opening throughout Great Britain of dance clubs that imitated the Hacienda. These licensed venues could profit from the new subculture. Before long every British city had large clubs where DJs played house, dealers sold Ecstasy, and kids danced late into the night.

PEOPLE born and raised in Manchester, known as Mancunians, tend to exhibit a distinctive outlook on life that helps them get through one hardship after another. They usually think that Manchester is the greatest city in the world—perhaps in the history of the world. This faith took hold in a city with some of the bleakest and grayest weather in England, and it remains unshaken despite the continual exodus of family, friends, and neighbors to other places. Within a day or two of arriving in Manchester one is bound to hear that the city's women are the most beautiful in Great Britain, that the men are the toughest and most virile, that the styles on the street downtown will appear on London streets a few months later, that Liverpool is hardly worth a visit. Mancunians are also quick to disparage one another, continuing the age-old rivalries between local neighborhoods and boroughs, each with its own slightly different accent—between Salford and Wigan, between Stockport and Bolton, and on and on. What most unites the people of greater Manchester is a belief that the inhabitants of southern England

are lazy, worthless, and effete. The entrepreneurial spirit of the cotton barons has merged with the radicalism and defiance of their workers to produce a sensibility in Manchester that is cocky and chauvinistic. Indeed, Mancunians often seem more American than English.

The success of the Hacienda encouraged the opening of restaurants, bars, and clubs in other empty industrial spaces downtown. The city council soon recognized the potential value of a thriving nightlife to the local economy. Greater Manchester boasts one of the largest student populations in Europe, with twenty colleges and universities in the area. The combination of students, working-class kids, and adventurous tourists promised to supply a large customer base for downtown clubs. In 1988 the Central Manchester Development Corporation, a quasi-public agency, began to convert warehouses near the Hacienda into apartments and lofts. A neighborhood that had been completely desolate when the club opened, in 1982, subsequently attracted thousands of young, trendy inhabitants. Proposals were circulated to create a "24 Hour City," a central Manchester where the party never ended. Pat Karney, a prominent city councillor, even thought that drugs could be used as a draw. "Ecstasy, in our view, is part of a cultural package alongside music and clothes," he told *City Life* magazine. "This kind of entertainment economy makes a city a more exciting place to live."

On a Saturday night Manchester's bars and clubs can now house approximately 25,000 people. There are scores of them, catering to a wide variety of tastes. One of the liveliest sections of town is the "Gay Village." Eight years ago a gay bar named Manto opened in a former trade-union hall near a disused shipping canal. The area was best known at the time for its bus station, prostitutes, and overall spookiness at night, owing to a lack of streetlights. Today the neighborhood around Canal Street has perhaps the largest concentration of gay businesses in the United Kingdom, aided by investment from the Central Manchester Development Corporation. The Gay Village stages an annual Mardi Gras in August, and tens of thousands of revelers attend. The celebration recently featured a parade of floats through



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downtown Manchester, go-go boys and girls, flamenco dancers, a fun fair, and a special chartered "Discoloco" train, with its own dance floor, which brought drag queens up from London.

Manchester's population loss has been partly offset since the Second World War by the arrival of immigrants from Britain's former colonies. The city now has a large Chinatown and thriving communities of Indians and West Indians. Dozens of Indian restaurants have opened along Wilmslow Road in Rusholme, forming a "curry mile" that is a popular late-night destination. After the pubs close, the curry mile gets crowded, and a familiar northern ritual unfolds. At Indian restaurants lavishly decorated in red velvet and gold leaf, drunken young Englishmen loudly insult the waiters and criticize the food. Other customers try hard to ignore the racial epithets. The waiters suffer the abuse with quiet dignity; the rowdies complain but pay their bill. Both sides of the old imperial equation leave the encounter feeling superior. A woman apologizes for her friends' behavior, the waiters resume their work, and the restaurant is calm until the next group of drunken lads finds a table.

FROM the Madchester scene of the late 1980s came a band, the Stone Roses, that revived rock-and-roll in Great Britain. Aside from the Smiths, who broke up in 1987, British rock bands of the Thatcher era had been memorable

**CDs by Manchester bands;
below, the annual Mardi Gras
festival in the Gay Village**

mostly for their big hair. The Stone Roses incorporated some of the Hacienda's dance beats in their songs, added wah-wah guitar riffs, and created a swirling, psychedelic sound that evoked Britain's pop supremacy of the late 1960s. The band's huge success in the United Kingdom encouraged British kids to learn how to play guitar and to riffle through their parents' record collections for old albums by the Small Faces, the Beatles, Cream, and the Kinks. The new bands inspired by the Stone Roses tended to write songs with a familiar ring, adding little to sounds first heard thirty years ago—but they infused British rock-and-roll with an energy and a passion that had long been missing. The greater Manchester area soon produced a number of popular rock bands, including Inspiral Carpets, the Charlatans UK, and the Verve. A former roadie for Inspiral Carpets, Noel Gallagher, formed Oasis in 1993 with his brother, Liam. The two had grown up in Manchester, and idolized the Stone Roses; Noel had spent many late nights at the Hacienda. The success of their band elevated rock-and-roll into the music of the British establishment—a source of national pride applauded by both Labour and Tory politicians. Oasis borrowed

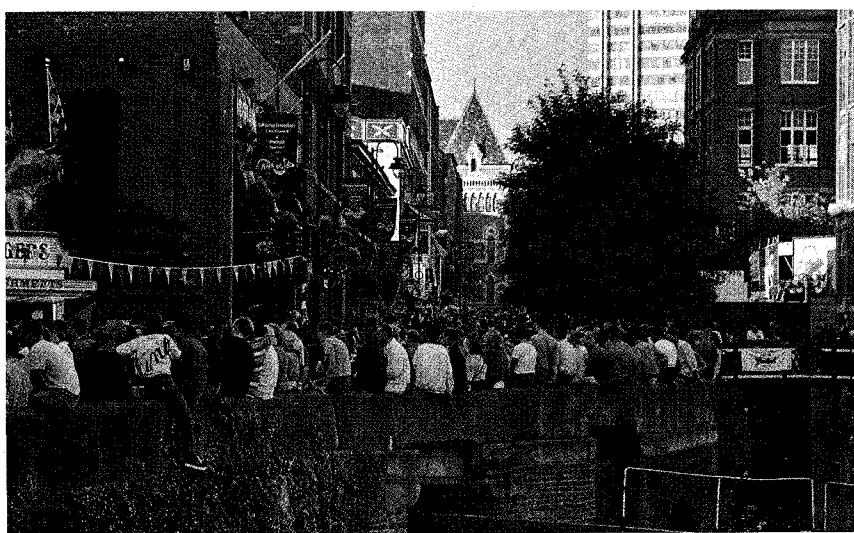
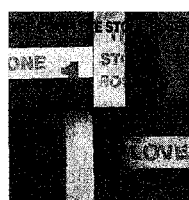
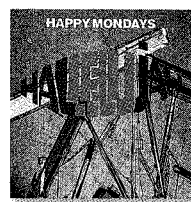
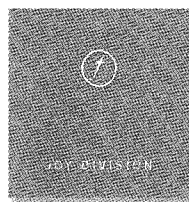
lyrics and melodies from the Beatles, and last year eclipsed them in a survey by Virgin Megastores as England's all-time favorite rock band. Sales of the Manchester group's album (*What's the Story? Morning Glory?*) are now approaching

those of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper*, the largest-selling album in British history.

Seemingly everybody under the age of thirty in Manchester is in a band, leaving a band, about to start a band, or busy managing someone else's band. British unemployment benefits—frequently held responsible for a lack of initiative among young people, for their aimlessness and aversion to hard work

—have actually helped to make rock music one of Great Britain's few profitable exports. British rock musicians often learn how to play their instruments while living for years on the dole. One guitarist I met in Manchester had been on the dole for more than fifteen years, while playing in a series of bands. Early in his career Mick had enjoyed a taste of success, recording a hit song, touring England with Happy Mondays as his opening act, shooting a rock video in Los Angeles. "Youthful stupidity" had ended that career phase. Now he was parking cars, distributing handbills at street fairs, and forming a "fantastic" new band, he said with typical Mancunian bluster, that would soon get him back onto the charts.

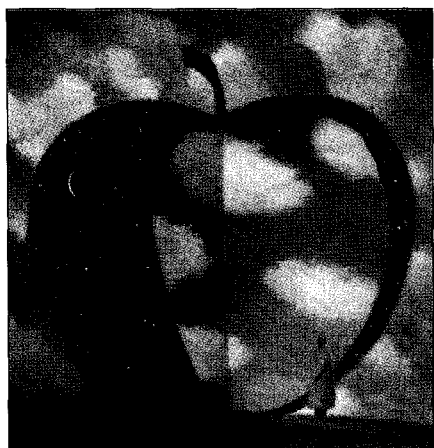
THE unemployment rate in Manchester has recently declined, according to official statistics. The city has become the financial center of England's northwest, and also a popular place to shop. Expansion of the Manchester Airport, the upcoming Commonwealth Games in the city, and the rebuilding of a downtown section heavily damaged by an IRA bomb in 1996 have attracted outside investment and created new jobs in construction. There are great hopes for increased tourism:



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Manchester's industrial legacy is being displayed in new museums and transmuted into theme-park attractions. In *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), George Orwell used the slag heaps of Lancashire and the "smoke-dim slums of Manchester" as a metaphor for the evils of capitalism and of a technological society that valued efficiency above all else. Today Wigan Pier boasts "a major heritage centre depicting life . . . at the turn of the century," according to an advertisement placed by the local borough. The ad is dominated by a photograph of a golfer taking a swing; above him is the slogan "Tee off in Wigan for a perfect break."

Most of the recent growth in Manchester employment has occurred in the service sector, where wages are generally much lower than those paid by factory jobs. Great Britain still does not have a guaranteed minimum wage (though one is due to take effect next year). In 1994 it was estimated that almost a third of full-time workers in Great Britain were earning less than the "threshold of decency" established by the Council of Europe—poverty-level wages. "It's our job to glory in inequality," Margaret Thatcher once said, "and see that talents and abilities are given vent and expression for the benefit of us all." From 1979 to 1993 the number of British people living in poverty nearly tripled. Two years ago a United Nations report found that Great Britain had the most unequal society in the West, with the poorest two fifths of the population receiving a smaller share of the nation's income than the comparable population receives in any other industrialized country except Russia. The widening gulf between rich and poor is evident in greater Manchester, where the wealthy of suburban Cheshire live far removed from the slums of Ordsall. Homeless people now wander amid the city's trendy new restaurants and bars. Some are young people who were drawn to Manchester by the club scene, partied too hard, and wound up on the streets.

Over the past decade the use of Ecstasy has become commonplace throughout Great Britain. According to Mike Linnell, a staff member at Manchester's Lifeline Drugs Agency, roughly a million hits of Ecstasy are now consumed every weekend in Britain. Each tablet

costs about £8 (\$13). The short-term risks of using Ecstasy seem relatively mild for most people. Nevertheless, half a dozen or so British kids die every year from the heatstroke that can be caused by taking Ecstasy and dancing for hours without drinking enough liquid. The long-term effects of Ecstasy use are much less clear. A number of studies conducted on animals suggest that chronic Ecstasy use may permanently damage serotonin-secreting cells in the brain. The current generation of British young people, known as the "E-generation," may in the future face an increased risk of depression, among other things. Ecstasy now permeates British youth culture, its influence extending from music to literature and advertising. Television ads have used house music to sell cars, and candy advertisements in magazines have relied on imagery with obvious references to Ecstasy. The mass marketing of the drug reached an apotheosis when the Scottish novelist Irvine Welsh, author of the best seller *Trainspotting*, promoted his *Ecstasy: Three Tales of Chemical Romance* with a book party at the Hacienda.

The celebration of Ecstasy has led to experimentation with other mind-altering substances. The drug scene in Manchester today resembles that in the United States during the early 1970s, when kids were eager to try anything once and likely to take everything at once. Marijuana is by far the most popular drug at the moment, and LSD use is rising. But the growing popularity of cocaine, amphetamines, and alcohol has most influenced the mood on the streets. For those who like their nightlife tinged with the threat of violence, Manchester is now the place to go.

Manchester's crime rate has soared in recent years. It is one of the highest in England and Wales. Most of the city's crime is property-related: burglaries, shoplifting, and car thefts. Muggings have become more common, however, and police officers at times wear bullet-proof vests. The city has an anarchic feeling. Playground equipment and bus shelters are destroyed for the sheer joy of it; tidy middle-class homes sport burglar alarms; and boisterous young men stream from pubs at closing time, looking for a fight. "A shocked vicar woke to find thieves had stolen three stained

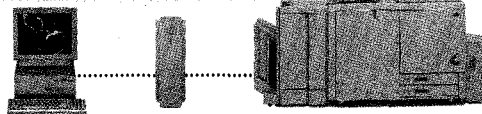
glass windows," a Manchester newspaper reported not long ago; these days anything that can be sold may be stolen. Manchester's teen idols, much like America's "gangsta" rappers, often boast about their youthful criminal exploits (and no doubt exaggerate or fabricate a few of them). Shaun Ryder, the charismatic lead singer first of Happy Mondays and now of Black Grape, claims to have burned down a school science building at the age of ten or eleven, to have shoplifted and pick-pocketed his way through the major cities of Europe, to have sold drugs, fed rat poison to the pigeons of downtown Manchester, and started his musical career with sound equipment that his father nicked from Manchester social clubs. Noel Gallagher, of Oasis, has bragged about committing burglaries as a teenager. And Rob Collins—the keyboard player of the Charlatans UK who died in a car accident two years ago—was arrested after the release of the band's second album for serving as the getaway driver during a liquor-store robbery. The Charlatans had to stop touring for four months while Collins was in prison.

The drug culture of Manchester's dance clubs soon attracted the attention of local gangs. Taking control of a club's door policy became an important first step toward controlling the sale of Ecstasy within the club. Bouncers affiliated with one drug gang tried to prevent rival dealers from getting in the door. The Hacienda was drawn into a rivalry between the drug gangs of Salford and Cheetham Hill. In February of 1991 the club voluntarily closed for a few months—people were bringing weapons into the club, and a gang member threatened one of the bouncers with a gun. One night not long after the Hacienda reopened, gang members sneaked in through a side door, eluding the club's metal detectors, and stabbed half a dozen bouncers. A drug scene that had begun with promises of peace, love, and harmony degenerated into a lucrative market for Ecstasy dealers. Different gangs eventually laid claim to different parts of the club. In July of last year a young man leaving the Hacienda was attacked by gang members. Losing money and facing the revocation of its license, the club shut down. As of this writing



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the Hacienda remains closed, and the building has been sold.

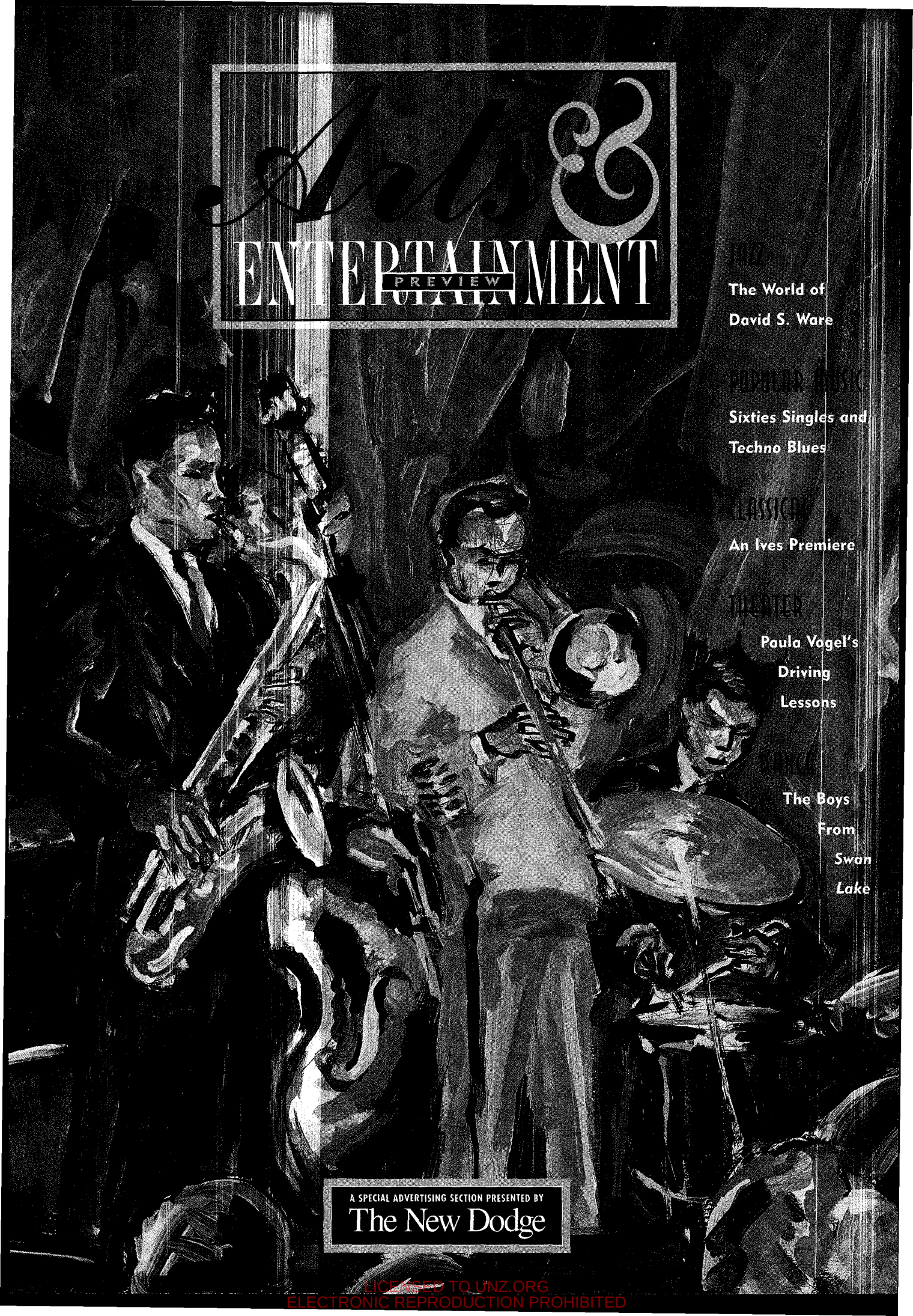
Graham Parker, a Manchester artist, compares the city's predicament today to that of the beleaguered French Foreign Legion fort in the movie *Beau Geste*. "At the end there are only about three soldiers left," he says, "but they're running around propping up the bodies of the dead in the turrets to make the fort look fully defended." Parker thinks the current nightlife economy is kept going by a handful of creative people and "a state of endearingly stropic denial." New bars and clubs keep opening, but the continued prosperity of downtown Manchester is by no means a sure thing. In March, Richard Leese, the leader of the city council, warned that Manchester's "rampant lawlessness" threatened to undermine investor confidence. Too much crime might put a damper on the nightlife; a thrilling sense of vague danger could easily turn into fear of walking the streets. Ten years after the second summer of love the acid-house that emerged from Manchester's club scene has mutated into new forms of electronic dance music: trance, techno, happy hardcore, drum-'n'bass, acid jazz, jungle, trip-hop, and speed garage. At the moment, some of the most innovative British music is coming out of the city of Bristol, from performers like Tricky, Massive Attack, Portishead, and Roni Size. In music, as in so much else, Manchester may soon find itself trying to make money from its past. The façade of prosperity may crumble as the party moves elsewhere. Even if Manchester's nightlife continues to boom, the thousands of laid-off factory hands and their families may find it difficult to gain employment in this postindustrial economy. No matter how many new bars and clubs open, the demand for bass players and drummers, for bouncers, bartenders, cocktail waitresses, and disc jockeys, will never absorb the supply of proud but discarded workers in Lancashire.

AT two in the morning on Whitworth Street a couple of young girls, all dressed up and made up and no older than fourteen, are still trying to talk their way into a club. The bouncers tower over them, make fun of them, take their cigarettes. No amount of flirting will get

these girls past the velvet ropes tonight. Some old winos sit on the ground a few feet away, drinking and cursing everybody who walks by. Whenever the door of a club opens, music spills into the street. Couples weave and stagger down the sidewalk, gently guiding each other home. A pack of middle-aged clubbers—the men with bald spots and ponytails, the women wearing pants too tight—leave the Ritz, where the DJ is playing classic rock. Bikers in head-to-toe leather stand in front of Jilly's, admiring some Harleys parked by the curb. At the Rainbow twenty-four-hour snooker is still going on. In the Gay Village handsome young men chat at tables beside the canal, and the bars are packed.

On a dark, narrow street filled with trash a young woman suddenly appears from a doorway. She has blonde hair and a lovely face that is covered with sores. She wears the torn remnants of a fashionable outfit and gloves with their fingers cut off. She sweetly asks me for money "to buy something to eat, luv, swear to God, just something to eat." I give her some money, and she acts grateful, much too grateful, before receding into the darkness again. On the next block a woman walks away from her boyfriend, who stands and yells at her. She ignores him, and he hurls an empty bottle at her back, missing by yards. She walks off without turning around, as the sound of his shouting and of shattering glass echoes off the brick walls. Outside the Britannia Hotel—what was once the grandest warehouse in town, each story built in a wildly different architectural style, and now adorned in a manner that would have pleased Elvis—five gaudy prostitutes stroll into a nightclub. An old Rover full of teenage boys speeds by, its stereo blasting Daft Punk, and the boys cheerfully wave to them.

Despite a century of decline and eleven years of Margaret Thatcher, despite lousy weather and even lousier prospects, despite the grim housing estates, the boarded-up buildings, the shallow obsessions of club culture, the drugs, gangs, and garbage in the streets, Manchester still feels alive. That is an accomplishment, however long it lasts. The place survives through small acts of defiance. In and around the ruins of an empire, kids are dancing. ☼



Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

PREVIEW

1992

The World of
David S. Ware

POPULAR MUSIC

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BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY BLUES

On the continuum of clean to dirty blues, R. L. Burnside plays way over on the dirty side. "Grunge blues" would not be too strong a term for a sound that fermented in Mississippi nightclubs where a performer had to make people dance even if he had only a cheap guitar and an amp that distorted for all the wrong reasons. To inspire dancing, the musician must groove, and that has always been Burnside's great strength in a unique style that owes more to John Lee Hooker than to B. B. King. On *Come On In* (Fat Possum/Epitaph) the producer Tom Rothrock takes Burnside's groove into the next millennium with a techno remix that starts with hypnotic raw mate-

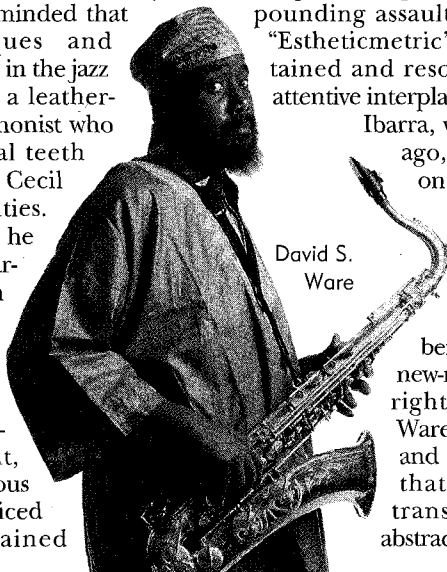


rial and goes to very, very, very hypnotic trance dance that still sounds like raw material. That's *raw* material. That grooves. Seem redundant? Well, that's the point. Burnside, who is seventy-one years old, has always believed that if you have a good riff, you should play it for a good long time. And Rothrock believes that after you play it for a good long time, you should play it some more, add some psychedelic sampling, and put it over a relentless drum track. Who would have thought at this late date that somebody could record another version of "Rollin', Tumblin'" that sounds fresh? This is something new in the blues that's truly new under the sun.

—C.M.Y.

WARE IN THE WORLD

For his initial foray as the creative consultant to Columbia Records' jazz division, Branford Marsalis has chosen to present the unapologetically avant-garde David S. Ware Quartet. This decision is guaranteed to generate slim sales and told-you-so claims that free music is a misguided indulgence. Yet Ware's *Go See the World* is no monochromatic rant, and may persuade the open-minded that extreme techniques and rhythms have a place in the jazz landscape. Ware is a leather-lunged tenor saxophonist who cut his professional teeth with the innovator Cecil Taylor in the seventies. For nearly a decade he has led his own quartet, which has been prominent in creating a bridge between jazz's freedom wing and alternative rock's head-banging contingent, and which on previous albums often sacrificed nuance for a sustained



David S. Ware

roar. *Go See the World* contains the greater variety Ware has displayed in recent years, and can serve as an entry point to his oft-treacherous sonic terrain. The African vamp on "Mikuro's Blues" connects Ware's combustible style to the music of the late John Coltrane, and a lengthy inspection of "The Way We Were" makes the bathetic Streisand ballad spread wings like a condor. Even the pounding assaults of "Lexicon" and "Estheticmetric" are effectively sustained and resolved, thanks to the attentive interplay of the quartet. Susie Ibarra, who joined two years ago, has a precise touch on drums along with the requisite snap; the pianist Matthew Shipp and the bassist William Parker, both charter members and each a leading new-music light in his own right, find ways to parry Ware's energy with motifs and melodic commentary that help to shape and translate the emotional abstractions.

—B.B.



Barry Tashian of The Remains

PSYCHEDELIC SINGLES

In 1972 Elektra released *Nuggets: Original Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era, 1965-1968*, and it sent a shock of recognition through thoughtful rock fans everywhere. It documented something that no one had thought to document before: white teenage boys discovering the Beatles, the blues, electric instruments (particularly the fuzz box), and LSD. Now Rhino has borrowed the title and the concept for a four-CD boxed set, expanding the original twenty-seven songs to 118. A smidgen short of definitive, *Nuggets* presents an explosion of creativity that is still reverberating in the vital remnants of punk and grunge and metal. These are the bands that saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan and thought, "I can do that." For the most part they couldn't. They didn't have the talent. But they made something come together for one song that was perfect. Three decades later, especially for men whose childhood touched the sixties, these songs are just about as exhilarating as music gets. Women may have a problem with the Mick Jagger-inspired sneering about treacherous babes who talk too much. If so, they can skip to the next cut for an outrageously surreal rendition of somebody's first acid trip. One might quibble with a few of the song selections (three by The Chocolate Watch Band and one by The Beau Brummels feels disproportionate), but The Electric Prunes, Human Beinz, Syndicate of Sound, The Remains, The Sonics, Shadows of Knight, The Music Machine, and the rest all deserve their place in music history right next to one another. Question for the ages: What was The Elastik Band thinking when it recorded "Spazz"? —C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe. Charles M. Young reviews popular music for Playboy, Musician, and other publications.

DAVID BARRY

DAVID KATZENSTEIN

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY TOM CHRISTOPHER

Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

DUTCH TREAT

Well before the director Julie Taymor woke up Broadway and made her fortune with *The Lion King*, her wizardly theater of masks and puppets was attracting convention-averse opera impresarios on three continents. For Seiji Ozawa's Saito Kinen Festival, in Japan, she mounted Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, eerily haunted by ravens. Since then Mozart's *The Magic Flute* has taken her to Italy, Richard Strauss's *Salomé* to Russia, and Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* to Los Angeles. A revival of *Dutchman* now opens the Houston Grand Opera's new season (October 23–November 8; 713-227-2787). In Los Angeles, Taymor's *Dutchman* was best regarded as a work in progress. A recurrent mime sequence featured a stooped old émigré shuffling

MANAGEABLE MAHLER

Now that CD buyers can listen to virtually anything they want on demand, we forget how rare the opportunity to hear a given piece of music used to be. This month the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center drives the point home in somewhat uncommon fashion. On October 18 and 20 the principal work on the program is Gustav Mahler's sprawling six-movement song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*). It is not an especially noisy piece—much of it is in fact very quiet. But for every timbre Mahler imagined, he posited the instrument and the player, and his palette was immense. Performances early in the century were too scarce for the liking of Arnold Schoenberg, so he arranged *Das Lied*—as he and his circle arranged other works by their contemporaries—for more manageable forces, replacing Mahler's grand panoply with just thirteen players. The Chamber Music Society fields an all-star ensemble for the occasion, several members (such as the flutist Ransom Wilson and the violinists Ani Kavafian and Cho-Liang Lin) taking time out from major solo careers. The vocalists merit special attention too. The punishing, high-flying tenor part is sung



The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

by Anthony Dean Griffey, a strapping young powerhouse whose performance as Lennie in Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* at Glimmerglass Opera, the closely watched summer festival in Cooperstown, New York, served notice that a major talent had arrived. (Next month *Of Mice and Men* travels to the New York City Opera; for tickets call 212-307-4100.) The soulful mezzo-soprano part, blessed with perhaps the most deeply otherworldly music Mahler ever wrote, goes to Lorraine Hunt, an artist who makes every phrase she sings indelibly her own. If this is not the performance Mahler imagined, it should be one that would have touched him to the soul. (For tickets call 212-875-5788.)

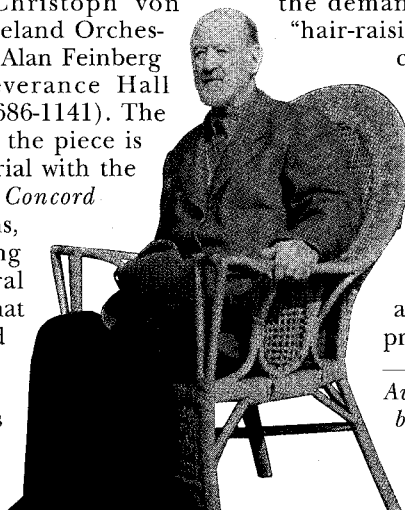
IVES LIVES

A world premiere by Charles Ives? More than four decades after the death of the rugged eccentric, the prospect would seem, to put it gently, remote. Yet exactly that is promised by Christoph von Dohnányi, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the pianist Alan Feinberg at Cleveland's Severance Hall (October 1–4; 800-686-1141). The *Emerson Concerto*, as the piece is called, shares material with the widely performed *Concord Sonata*. Ives, it seems, despaired of hearing any of his orchestral works performed. That fact goes far toward explaining the chaotic state of the manuscript of his heaven-storming *Universe Symphony*,

which could not be realized without tremendous leaps of faith (and much conjecture). The *Emerson Concerto*, Feinberg says, presents no such editorial problems, though he describes the demands on the pianist as "hair-raising." Feinberg, a specialist in what might be termed outsider music, with more than 200 premieres to his credit, is just the man to take them on. Dohnányi's credentials and the Cleveland's, of course, are every bit as impressive.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

Charles Ives



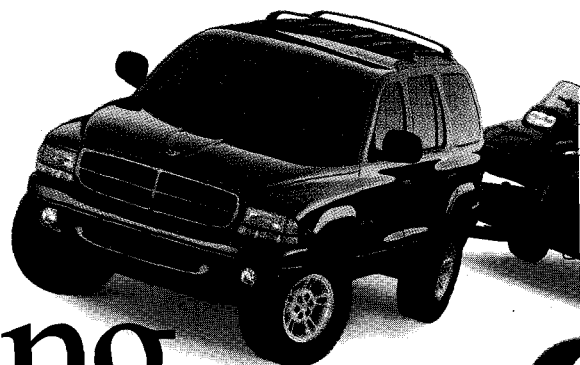
Taymor's *The Flying Dutchman*

wearily toward a park bench that pulled away every time he tried to sit down. This was the Wandering Jew, the Dutchman's prototype, and each time he appeared, the audience's hilarity grew louder. Now these problematic episodes are undergoing total revision, and puppet passages previously omitted on financial grounds are seeing the light at last. If everything falls into place, the Houston *Dutchman* could be one of the defining opera productions of the nineties. Even as it was, the Los Angeles vision at its best proved Taymor's genius for dressing the tale of sin and redemption in images of all but primal power. At one point a flotilla of model ships sailed by: hats borne on the heads of unsmiling women in billowing skirts who strode purposefully across the stage. They were a sea personified, and at floor level, unregarded by those mighty goddesses, male dancers (naked or nearly so) went swimming by like leviathans of the deep. At moments like these Taymor's *Dutchman* matched the majesty of great set pieces of *The Lion King*. (The music, need we add, is a good deal better.)

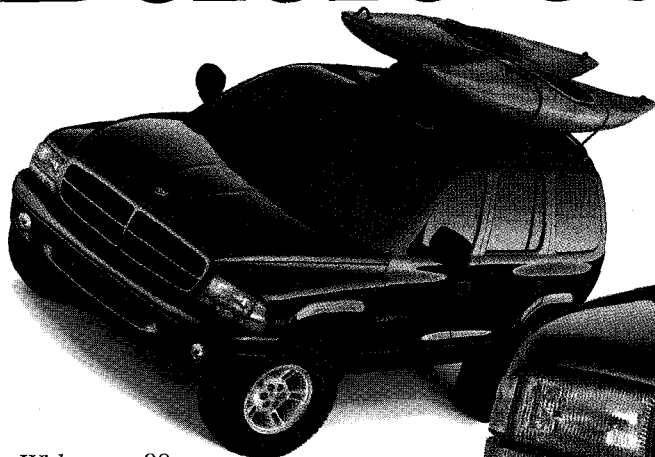


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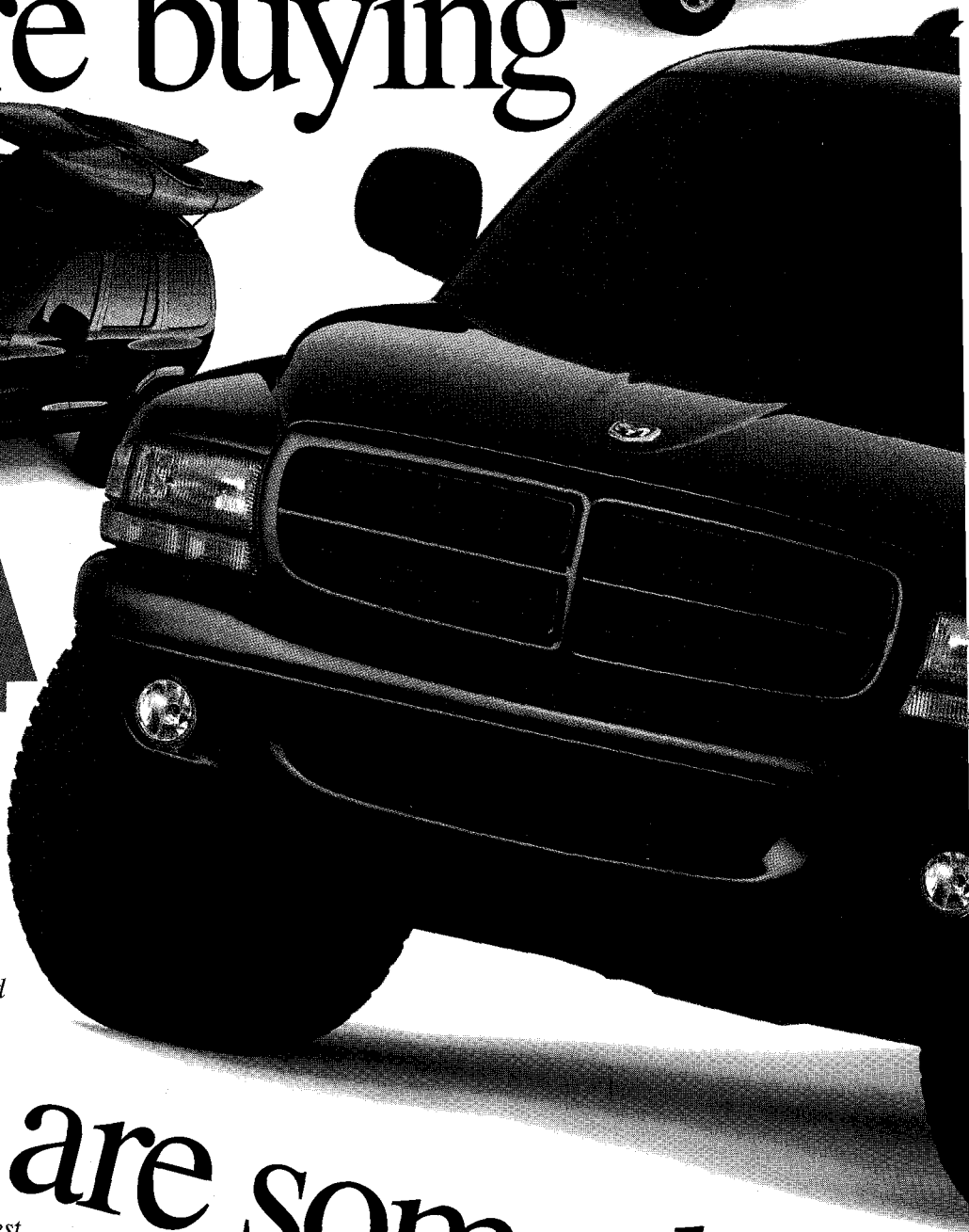
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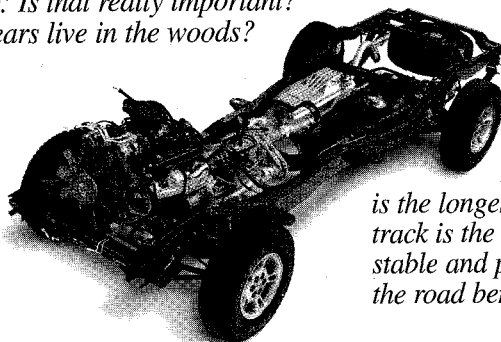


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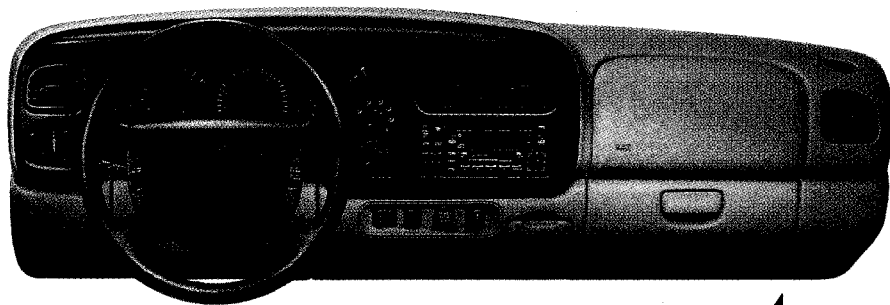


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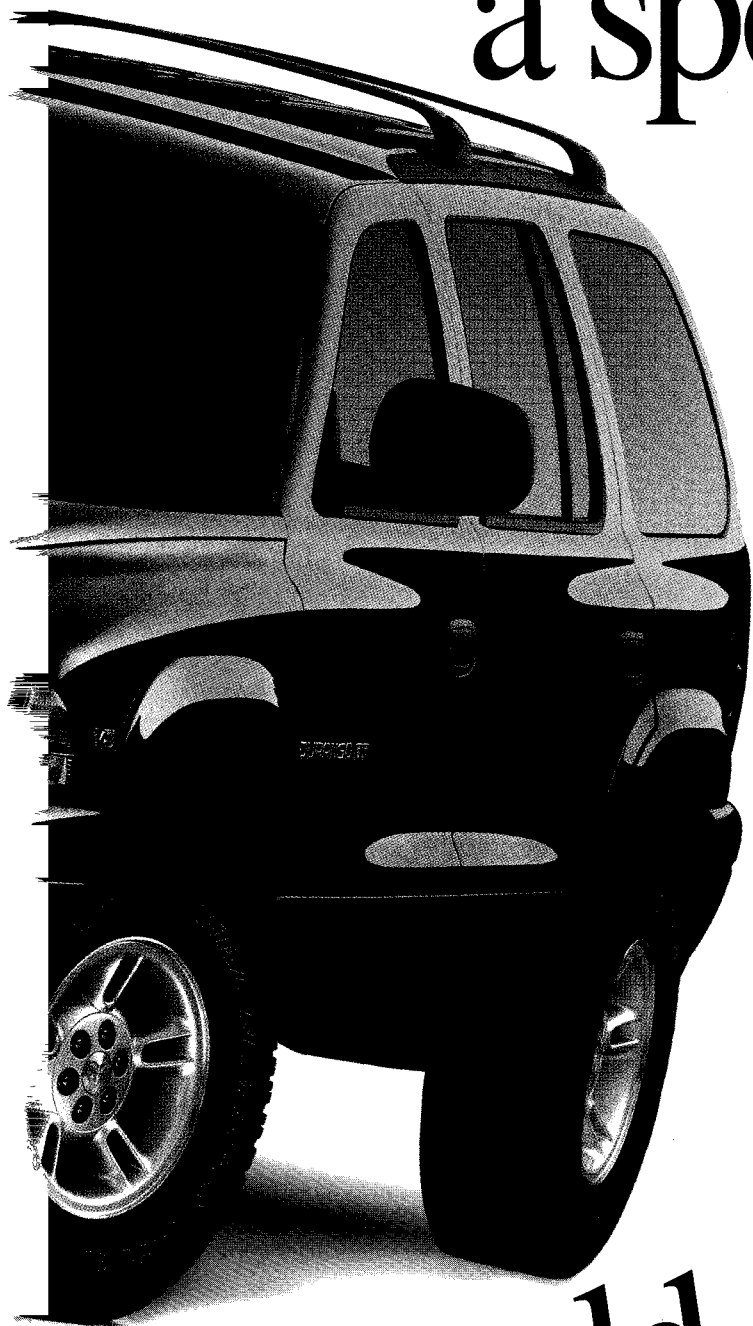


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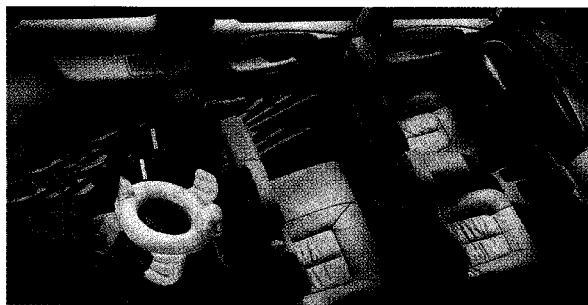


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Dance and Theater

BY NANCY DALVA AND JOHN ISEL

MOVING VIOLATIONS

Read all safety instructions: Paula Vogel's play *How I Learned to Drive*, which won the Pulitzer Prize this year, feels like speeding down a snaking mountain road. The hairpin turns in this tale of seduction between the lovingly attentive pedophile Uncle Peck and his niece L'il Bit leave one's empathies in a puddle on the passenger-side floor. It's Brechtian scene titles—"Idling in Neutral Gear"—create some distance, but still it's a harrowing ride. *The ignition*: "This play is an homage to *Lolita*, but from *Lolita*'s point of view," says the Brown University professor, who developed her play initially at Alaska's Perseverance Theatre. *Shifting into overdrive*: It opened off-Broadway, at the Vineyard Theatre, to critical acclaim in February of 1997 and enjoyed a year-long commercial run. *Engine specifications*: The play is powered by the two actors in the bravura leading roles (originated in New York by David Morse and Mary-Louise Parker), lubricated by a three-person Greek chorus that takes on a wide variety of characters, and accelerated by a lyrical memory-play purr broken by vaudeville-style scenes. *Cruising at highway speed*: This season Uncle Peck offers his tender and terrifying driving lessons at dozens of theaters. *How I Learned to Drive* zooms into Houston's Alley Theatre (Oct. 7-25; 713-228-8421), the Dallas Theater Center (Oct. 21-Nov. 15; 214-522-8499), the Philadelphia Theatre Company (Oct. 23-Nov. 22; 215-545-9700), and San Diego Repertory Theatre (Oct. 30-Nov. 5; 619-544-1000). Try to stick to the speed limit on your way to the box office. —J.I.

Nancy Dalva is the author of *Dance Ink*: Photographs. John Isel is a senior editor at *Stagebill*.



Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*

First it won the coveted Olivier Award in London. Next it sold out in Los Angeles. Now, after balletomanes worldwide have seen the television version and incessantly argued over it online, in person, and in print, Matthew Bourne's controversial reworking of *Swan Lake* is coming to Broadway. Call it ballet most fowl if you must, but this terpsichorean classic promises to be the novelty of the 1998-1999 season. Not only is it having a rare limited run on the Great White Way (Neil Simon Theatre, opening October 8; 212-307-4100), but also *Swan Lake* will be appearing in a new guise in the spring, when Peter Martin, the ballet master in chief of the New York City Ballet, marks the company's fiftieth anniversary with a new production. Not that variations on *Swan Lake* are something new to the dance world. They run the gamut from dozens upon dozens of productions

more or less faithful to the 1895 Petipa-Ivanov-choreographed original to variants more and more irreverent (the delightful Nureyev-Miss Piggy outing called *Swine Lake*, for instance), with all manner of spoofs and spins in between. (Nureyev's version for the Paris Opera Ballet is particularly dark and brooding.) However, it seems safe to say that the Bourne *Swan* is the most sensational rendition of avian eroticism in the canon or out, with the swan corps not the airy-fairy white-tutu-clad ballerinas of tradition but hunky, bare-chested guys in feather pants. (The gender switch is bird only—the prince remains a rather wimpily Oedipal young man with an exceedingly unpleasant mother.) The Bourne is faithful to the actual nature of swans—nasty, highly territorial birds with lethal beaks. It is also marginally faithful to the story, and follows the Tchaikovsky score, which leads to what some ballet fans will consider insouciant in-jokes and others will brand heresy. Choreographers have been tiptoeing toward radical rewrites for some time now. If audiences flock to Bourne's *Adventures in Motion Pictures* production, ballet may never be the same again. —N.D.

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE MUSICAL

Our Lord is testing us." Those words, intoned by a preacher who has helped to ban all dancing from a midwestern farm town, begin the 1984 film *Footloose*. They're also the words that ran through the mind of one theater critic after hearing that the movie was becoming a Broadway musical. However, messing with *Footloose* won't exasperate film historians (recall *On the Waterfront* or *Sunset Boulevard*) or overinflate a charming, intimate movie (see *Victor/Victoria* or *Big*). Anyway, *Footloose* always cried out to be a Broadway musical. Its soundtrack, with lyrics by the screenwriter Dean Pitchford, included a rack of Top 40 hits: the title tune, by Kenny Loggins; "Almost Paradise"; and, of course, "Let's Hear It for the Boy." The paper-thin plot excuse for the songs makes sense only in the stardust world of show music: the new kid in town starts a moral crusade for the right to hold a prom. Pitchford, the composer Tom Snow, and the director Walter Bobbie, late of the smash revival of *Chicago*, have

reworked the book, and have added nine new songs. *Footloose* begins previews at New York's Richard Rodgers Theatre on October 2 (212-307-4100). Nostalgia for the 1980s officially begins. —J.I.

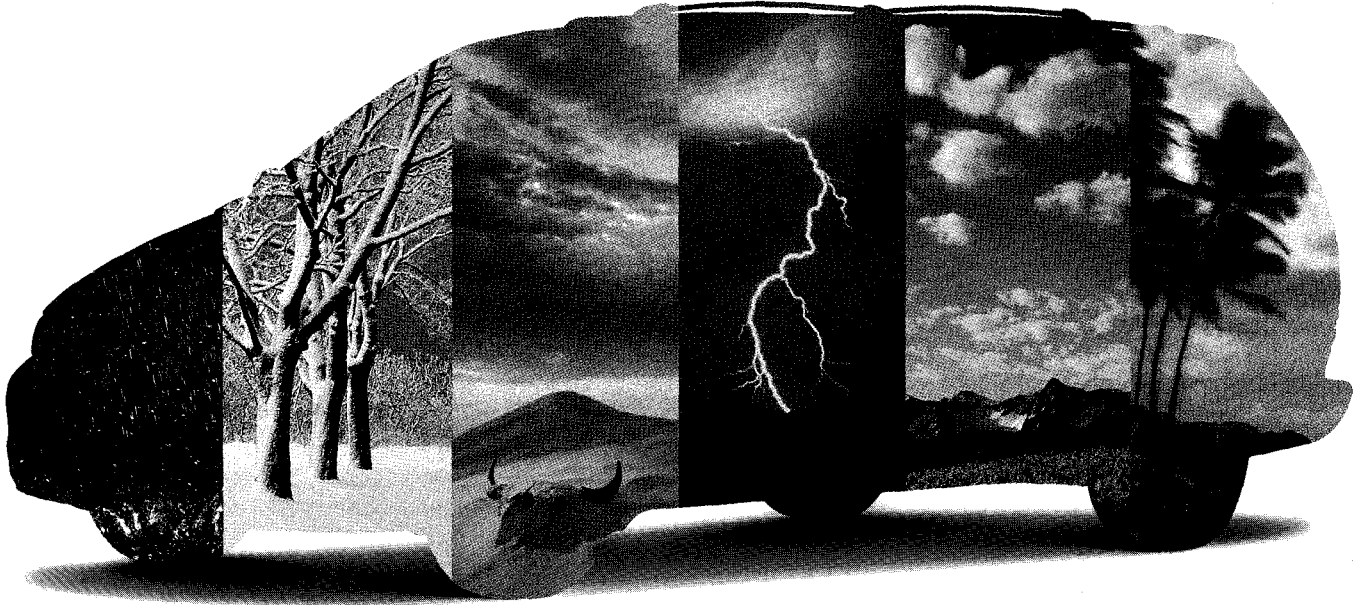


How I Learned to Drive



The New Dodge

This month's Arts & Entertainment Preview is brought to you by The New Dodge, also the sponsor of the TBS Superstation's "Destination Sunday" series. This month tune in for *Wildlife Adventure: The Great Bison Chase* (October 4 at 9:00 P.M.)—a fascinating look at the history of the buffalo in the changing American West. Join the show's host, Harry Hamlin, and Bison Pete, a retired buffalo breeder from Wyoming, as they set out on the trail of an annual bison roundup.



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Should Election Day Be a Holiday?

A simple, practical step might summon the ranks of nonvoters from the civic void

REGARDLESS of who wins in next month's midterm elections, a sure bet is that less than half of the voting-age population will actually participate. The percentage of the electorate casting ballots for the House of Representatives has fluctuated between 33 and 45 percent over the past sixteen midterm elections. Recent turnout rates suggest that the percentage in 1998 will probably be near the bottom of this range, and quite possibly even lower. In 1996 the presidential-election turnout fell below 50 percent for the first time since the early 1920s—when

women had just received the franchise and had not yet begun to use it as frequently as men. Last year not a single one of the eleven states that called their citizens to the polls managed to get a majority to vote. The best turnout occurred in Oregon, where a heated campaign debate had taken place on the question of whether to repeal the state's "right to die" law. The worst turnout last year was a shockingly low five percent, for a special election in Texas. This occurred even though Governor George W. Bush stumped the state for a week, urging people to participate and

by Martin P. Wattenberg

promising that a "yes" vote would result in a major tax cut.

Universal suffrage means that everyone should have an equal opportunity to vote, regardless of social background. But over the past three decades studies have found increasing biases in turnout. In particular, people without college degrees have become less likely to go to the polls. Statistics from the Census Bureau on turnout by educational achievement make the point. Respondents were asked if they had taken part in the most recent election in their area.

	1966	1994
No high school diploma	47%	26%
High school diploma	60%	41%
Some college	65%	50%
College degree	71%	64%

Since 1966 turnout rates have declined most sharply among people at the lower levels of education. In 1994 people with no college education made up 53 percent of the adult population but only 42 percent of the voters.

Turnout is now also greatly related to experience in life. Turnout rates have always been lowest among young people; perhaps this is why there was relatively little opposition in the early 1970s to lowering the voting age to eighteen. But not even the most pessimistic analysts could have foreseen the record-low participation rates of Generation X, as shown in the following census findings on age and turnout:

	1966	1994
18-20	—	17%
21-24	32%	22%
25-44	53%	39%
45-64	65%	57%
over 65	56%	61%

The low turnout among young voters today is paradoxical given that they are one of the best-educated generations in American history. Even those who have made it to college are expressing remarkably little concern for politics. Chelsea Clinton's class of 2001 recently set a new record for political apathy among college freshmen: only 27 percent said that keep-

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we
outgrow
our
plan?

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paperwork
makes me
sick?

what if?

what if I need an HMO, PPO, and POS ASAP?

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ing up with politics was an important priority for them, as opposed to 58 percent of the class of 1970, with whom Bill and Hillary Clinton attended college.

Of course, Chelsea's classmates have not seen government encroach on their lives as it did on the lives of their parents—through the Vietnam War and the draft. Nor has any policy affected them as directly as Medicare has affected their grandparents. It is noteworthy that senior citizens are actually voting at higher rates today than when Medicare was first starting up. Political scientists used to write that the frailties of old age led to a decline in turnout after age sixty; now such a decline occurs only after eighty.

*If all registered voters
had voted in 1994,
the Republicans would
not have won a majority
in the House.*

The greater access of today's seniors to medical care must surely be given some credit for this change. Who says that politics doesn't make a difference?

Yet it is difficult to persuade people who have channel surfed all their lives that politics really does matter. Chelsea's generation is the first in the age of television to grow up with narrowcasting rather than broadcasting. When CBS, NBC, and ABC dominated the airwaves, their blanket coverage of presidential speeches, political conventions, and presidential debates sometimes left little else to watch on TV. But as channels have proliferated, it has become much easier to avoid exposure to politics altogether. Whereas President Richard Nixon got an average rating of 50 for his televised addresses to the nation, President Clinton averaged only about 30 in his first term. Political conventions, which once received more TV coverage than the Summer Olympics, have been relegated to an hour per night and draw abysmal ratings. In sum, young people today have never known a time when most citizens paid attention to major political events. As a

result, most of them have yet to get into the habit of voting.

The revolutionary expansion of channels and Web sites anticipated in the near future is likely to worsen this state of affairs, especially for today's youth. Political junkies will certainly find more political information available than ever before, but with so many outlets for so many specific interests, it will also be extraordinarily easy to avoid public-affairs news altogether. The result could well be further inequality of political information, with avid followers of politics becoming ever more knowledgeable while the rest of the public slips deeper into political apathy. This year's expected low turnout may not be the bottom of the barrel.

SOME commentators welcome, rather than fear, the decline in turnout rates in America. If people do not vote, they say, citizens must be satisfied with the government. There is a certain logic to this view, because if nonvoters were extremely disgruntled with our leaders, they would undoubtedly take some political action. However, to argue that nonvoters are content with government just because they aren't actively opposing it stretches the logic too far. When the 1996 National Election Study asked people to rate their satisfaction with how democracy works in the United States, nonvoters were *less* positive than voters. Furthermore, young people were more than twice as likely as senior citizens to be dissatisfied with American democracy.

Why should young adults be satisfied with government, given how few benefits they receive from it in comparison with their grandparents? But until they start showing up in greater numbers at the polls, there will be little incentive for politicians to focus on programs that will help the young. Why should politicians worry about nonvoters any more than the makers of denture cream worry about people with healthy teeth? It is probably more than coincidental that Clinton's two most visible policy failures—the 1993 economic-stimulus package and the 1994 effort to establish universal health care—had their strongest backing from people who were not even registered to vote. Congressional Republicans may rationally have anticipated that many of these proposals' sup-

porters were unlikely to be judging them in the 1994 elections.

After the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994, I saw a bumper sticker that read NEWT HAPPENS WHEN ONLY 37 PERCENT OF AMERICANS VOTE. Although I don't usually let bumper stickers determine my research agenda, this one piqued my interest. Would the Republicans have won the majority of House seats if turnout had been greater? A simple way to address this question is to assess how much difference it would have made if voters had mirrored the adult population in terms of education. According to the 1994 National Election Study, 30 percent of voters who lacked a high school diploma and 62 percent of voters with college degrees voted for Republican candidates for the House. Increasing turnout among the least educated citizens would thus have made some difference. If turnout rates had been equal in all education categories, the Republican share of the vote would have fallen from 52.0 to 49.2 percent.

Although it is unlikely that people of differing education levels would ever vote at exactly the same rate, this is only one of many biases in electoral participation. A more comprehensive method of estimating the impact of higher turnout is to gauge the attitudes of nonvoters toward those factors that influenced voters in 1994: party identification, approval of Clinton, stands on issues, and incumbency. Examining only survey respondents who were registered but did not vote, I found that these nonvoters would have favored Democratic candidates by an even greater margin than that by which actual voters supported the Republicans. Had all registered citizens gone to the polls, the Republicans' share of the vote would have been reduced by 2.8 percent—exactly the same estimate as arrived at above. If this loss occurred in all districts, the Republicans would have won only 206 seats—twenty-four fewer than they actually won, and twelve short of a majority.

Such findings, regrettably, suggest that nothing will be done to increase turnout in America. Few Republicans will want to correct a situation that has benefited them in the past. Yet until something is done, the House of Representatives will be representative not of the electorate but only of the minority that actually votes.

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WHAT can be done to reverse the decline in turnout? At his first press conference after the 1996 election Bill Clinton was asked about the poor turnout and how to increase participation in the future. The President stumbled over this question—he didn't really have an opinion on what could be done, and he concluded by asking the members of the press corps whether they had any ideas. Clinton's apparent frustration in addressing the question probably stems from his involvement in passing the 1993 Motor Voter Act. He and many others believed that its voter-registration reforms would increase turnout. But although the registration rolls swelled in state after state pri-

*Not even the most
lenient voter-registration
procedures are the
answer to the problem
of low turnout.*

or to the 1996 election, the turnout rate fell dramatically on Election Day. (The Census Bureau, paradoxically, found fewer people in 1996 than in 1992 who said they were registered. Apparently, the Motor Voter procedures made registering so easy that many forgot they had placed their names on the voting ledgers.)

Had Clinton been better advised on this subject, he would not have expected turnout to increase simply because registering to vote had become easier. North Dakota has since 1951 not required people to register in order to vote, yet its turnout is not especially high, and it has seen turnout in presidential elections decline by 22 percent since 1960. Minnesota and Wisconsin have allowed citizens to register on Election Day since the mid-1970s, but they have lower turnout rates today than when they had tighter registration laws. In short, not even the most lenient voter-registration procedures are the answer to the problem of low turnout.

Clinton is said occasionally to remark that solutions to most public-policy problems have already been found somewhere—we just have to scan the horizons

for them. This certainly applies to increasing turnout. Three possible changes stand out as particularly likely to get Americans to the polls—though, unfortunately, their probable effectiveness is inversely related to the plausibility of their ever being enacted in the United States.

If in an ideal democracy everyone votes, people could simply be required to participate. This is how Australians reasoned when they instituted compulsory voting after their turnout rate fell to 58 percent in 1922. Since then the turnout in Australia has never fallen below 90 percent, even though the maximum fine for not voting is only about \$30, and judges readily accept any reasonable excuse. However, American political culture is based on John Locke's views on individual rights, whereas Australian culture was shaped by Jeremy Bentham's concept of the greatest good for the greatest number. Most Americans would probably assert that they have an inviolable right *not* to vote.

Beyond that, it is debatable whether we really want to force turnout rates in America up to 90 percent. People with limited political knowledge might deal with being compelled to vote by making dozens of decisions in the same way they choose lottery numbers. In Australia this is known as the "donkey vote," for people who approach voting as if they were playing the old children's game. Given Australia's relatively simple electoral process, the donkey vote is a small proportion; in America it would probably be greater.

Evidence from around the world indicates that our turnout rates could be increased if we adopted some form of proportional representation. In our winner-take-all system many Americans rightly perceive that their votes are unlikely to affect election outcomes. Proportional representation changes this perception by awarding seats to small voting blocs. The threshold for representation varies by country, but typically any party that receives more than five percent of the national vote earns seats in the legislature. Almost inevitably when proportional representation is instituted, the number of political parties grows. And with a range of viable parties to choose from, people tend to feel that their choice truly embodies their specific interests. Hence they are more likely to vote.

If we were to adopt proportional rep-

resentation, new parties would be likely to spring up to represent the interests of groups such as African-Americans, Latinos, and the new Christian right. Although this would give members of these groups more incentive to vote, and thus would raise the low turnout rates of minority groups, a price would be paid for this benefit. The current system brings diverse groups together under the umbrellas of two heterogeneous parties; a multi-party system would set America's social groups apart from one another. Proportional representation therefore seems no more practical on the American scene than compulsory voting.

A simple but effective change, however, could be made in election timing. An ordinary act of Congress could move Election Day to a Saturday or make it a holiday, thereby giving more people more time to vote. An 1872 law established the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November as Election Day. At that point in history it made little difference whether elections were on Saturday or Tuesday, because most people worked on Saturday. Only Sunday would have been a day free of work, but with elections in the late nineteenth century being occasions for drinking and gambling, that option was out of the question in such a religious country.

Americans have become quite accustomed to Tuesday elections, just as they have to the nonmetric system for weights and measures and other artifacts of another time. State after state has set primary-election dates on Tuesdays—all twentieth-century decisions, some of them quite recent. It would be difficult to change this custom. Furthermore, there would probably be some resistance from Orthodox Jews and Mormons to putting Election Day on their sabbath.

An alternative would be to declare Election Day a national holiday. This would probably be resisted on the basis of cost. A solution would be to move Election Day to the second Tuesday of November and combine it with Veterans' Day, traditionally celebrated on November 11. This would send a strong signal about the importance our country attaches to voting. And what better way could there be to honor those who fought for democratic rights than for Americans to vote on what could become known as Veterans' Democracy Day? ☞



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A Mediterranean Mix

*Off the coast of Tunisia,
a speck of Italy*

MY first visit to the island of Pantelleria was six years ago. When I left, nostrils full of the fragrances of wild flowers and sea air, eyes saturated by a thousand colors, soul at peace, I promised myself I would come back. I left with some trepidation,

by G. Franco Romagnoli

for there was then talk of striving to put Pantelleria on the international tourist map.

Early this May, Gwen, my companion, and I came to the island to mend the wear and tear of urban life, to plan and think in peace and quiet—in other words, for a vacation. We eschewed the sea route (a ferryboat leaves Trapani, the western tip of

Sicily, at midnight and reaches Pantelleria at 5:00 A.M.) for the clean speed of flight: a half hour from Trapani (it would have been a full one from Palermo, or one and a half from Rome) and we were there, at the end of Italy. Seventy miles southwest of Sicily, Pantelleria is Italy's southernmost point.

Then again, at forty-four miles off the North African coast, it is geographically and ethnically closer to Tunisia.

Seen from the air, the island looks like a roundish scarab thrust up from the sea: it is contoured by steep cliffs, craggy, dark, and foreboding. Where planes descend, the landscape suddenly turns flat,

green, and reassuring—just what you would wish for a landing. And once in the main town and port, also named Pantelleria, we began to think that my concerns about an onslaught of tourism were premature: yes, the airport is more modern, the flights are more numerous, and we did spot a supermarket and a new gas pump on the way to town, but the place is still unassuming, quiet, and slow-paced, without noisy traffic jams or the buzzing of motorbikes that is so irritatingly common in Italy today.

There are five hotels in town, another five or so around the island, and many condominiums and private homes available for visitors to rent. We stayed about two miles out of town, at the Mursia Hotel. It is modern, efficiently elegant, but not, as resort hotels can be, overbearing. The architecture, like most of the island's, is whitewashed, arched Moorish; the recall of North Africa is immediate. We were attracted by the staff's gracious, smiling hospitality (this trait is in evidence throughout the island) and the one-stop practicality. If we needed a car or a boat, one was available for rent, and



"Bhili" Tribals participate in a "Bhagoriya" festival



"Big cat" in Kanha National Park



Rice boat on Vembanad Lake, Kerala

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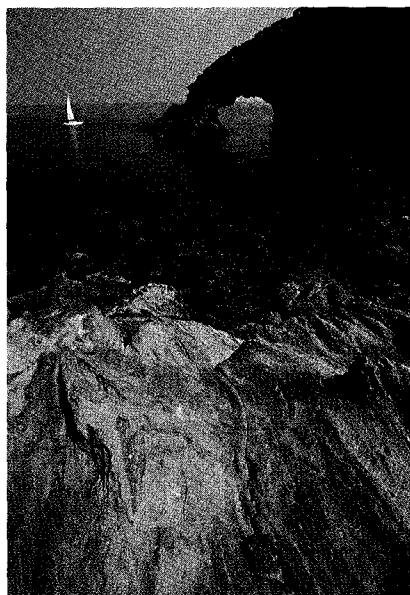
Biancheria on the line and, below, L'Elefante

the restaurant's food was excellent and reasonably priced.

Through the open French doors of our room the perennial breezes brought in the sound and the moist fragrance of the sea, which was just a few steps away. But do not expect a sandy beach: there is hardly one on the whole island. Using the hotel pool would have been cheating. Cement steps, or steps carved in the rock, lead to landings by the sea. The water changes color like a kaleidoscope with the slant of the sun, and yet its transparency is absolute: water like a liquid sky. With a diving mask you can marvel at how far down the light penetrates. That swimming-in-the-sky experience can be had in hundreds of coves and inlets all around the island.

PANTELLERIA, in a formative geophysical spasm, bubbled up to the surface 300,000 or so years ago. Its black volcanic appearance justifies the name the Phoenicians gave to the island: Black Pearl of the Mediterranean. Live *favare*, or mini-geysers, continue to puff boiling-hot steam here and there, and several warm mineral springs attest to the still-active geology. In fact, the whole area is mischievously unrestful, puzzling geologists today as it did civilian authorities of the recent past. In 1831 an island about three miles in circumference surfaced a few miles off Pantelleria's coast facing Sicily. It was immediately made part of the territory of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and named Ferdinanda in honor of King Ferdinand II. French scientists intent on studying it named it Julia (the surfacing happened in July), and sailors from a British frigate in the vicinity, who had been sent to plant His Majesty's flag on the still-wet rock, named it Graham.

it, and one famous formation looks like a huge elephant dipping its trunk into the water. This is L'Elefante, the landmark most closely identified with Pantelleria. Like searching for characters in the billowing of clouds, discovering animal or human figures in the volcanic rock is fun. Among the gnarled and tortured black rocks, especially in the east-central part of the island, a multitude of indigenous plants grow. Botanists from the world over come to admire and study what I was told are 569 varieties of plants divided into seventy-three families, 306 genera, and 429 species. These cover a full dictionary of botanical terms and names, coldly technical and Latin, and hardly evocative—to my ears—of the plants' and flowers' beauty. One plant that is ubiquitous and particularly appealing, for the contrast formed by its lily-white blossoms sprouting from cracks of the harsh black rock, is the caper. It takes so well to this soil and climate that its



FRANCO BARBAGALLO / GRAZIA NERI

But after a short time the islet sank again. (It had performed the same trick in 10 B.C. and 1200 A.D.) All that remains today is a shallow volcanic bank, a paradise for a multitude of fish and for the scuba divers who go after them.

On Pantelleria itself volcanic eruptions have piled lava upon lava, creating grotesque constructions here and there: arches plunge into the sea, rocky columns sprout from

edible buds are first-quality, and capers are grown commercially here, generating a sizable income for the island.

Rosario Di Fresco, who is the president of the local archaeological club, a defender of all that is Pantelleria, and the animator of much that will be, showed Gwen and me around the island. He explained that human settlement began some 5,000 years ago, with the arrival of the Sesioti, who were probably a tribe of entrepreneurs given to quarrying and exporting the obsidian found in great quantity on Pantelleria. Obsidian was the black gold of the Neolithic era—a glass-rock material essential for producing sharp-edged knives, cutting tools, and arrow points. Several archaeological sites are marked on Di Fresco's map of the island, including the Sesioti's large Neolithic tombs. The sites have in general been left to age without much human protection, and to me this added to their interest, for they have escaped the embalmed, preserved feeling of the fenced-off archaeological grounds found in all the rest of Italy.

The position of the island as a stepping-stone between Africa and Sicily, at the intersection of sea lanes in the Mediterranean, where sailors could rest and restock their ships, made Pantelleria strategically very appetizing, Di Fresco explained. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Moors, and Normans (who finally annexed it to Sicily) took over the island in turn, all leaving ethnic and architectural traces of their presence. The island's location on the sea routes gained it the Greek name of Kossyros, The Smaller One, probably because as a navigational reckoning point it came after the larger Malta. It was known to the Romans as Cossyra.

Other foreign marks—actually scars—were left during the Second World War. Mussolini called Pantelleria the unsinkable Italian aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean (the Italian navy having no real aircraft carriers) and also, unwisely, boasted that it concealed a secret submarine base. These pronouncements were taken seriously by the Allied air forces, which bombarded the island heavily, softening an already soft landing target. Pantelleria was the first parcel of Italian soil to fall to the Allies with essentially no casualties—the most distressing incident, as Churchill tells in his memoirs, occurring when a local donkey bit a Tom-

It goes about a country mile.

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my. Nonetheless, the bombs added many man-made craters to the natural ones.

Of all the leftover ethnic influences, Arabic is still the foremost: the local language retains some Arabic-derived words, and many sites have names in or from Arabic. Even the name of the island is a corruption, it is said, of the Arabic Bent El Rion, Daughter of the Wind—a sobriquet that couldn't be more appropriate. The winds that sweep the Channel of Sicily from all four cardinal points hit the island on an average of 337 days a year. Wind is truly one of Pantelleria's shaping forces: caper bushes, olive trees, and grapevines are trained to grow low on the ground, out of the wind. The good news for the visitor is that there is nearly always a protected leeward side somewhere. And generally the wind is warm: the average tem-

perature is about 68°. Of course, it is warmer in summer, or when the southern sirocco blows up from the Sahara, and slightly colder with the storm-laden libeccio during the short—and still mild—winter months.

musi—traditional constructions peculiar to Pantelleria—that Giorgio Armani has built there for himself and his guests. *Dammusi* derive their name from the Arabic *damus*, for “domed edifice.” Large or small, built of volcanic-stone blocks, these one-story houses are unique for the squashed-down domes that form bumps on their otherwise flat roofs. Each room has one—count the bumps and you know how many rooms a *dammuso* has. In a water-poor land their purpose is to collect rainwater and channel it through spouts into holding cisterns. *Dammusi* also have thick walls that efficiently retain warmth in winter and coolness in summer. By now many spartan old dwellings have been made modern and comfortable.

An admirable case in point sits high on a hill not far from Gadir, in the village of Tracino. Here Aldo Volpi, a native of Milan, has transformed an abandoned windmill *dammuso* into a series of elegant dining rooms, with windows and terraces offering wide-angle views of sea and sky. More important than the architectonic feat is the fact that Volpi has created a superb restaurant, I Mulini, whose menu of strictly researched traditional local dishes is enriched with modern interpretations of the same. Memorable are Volpi's *ammogghiu*, a garlicky sauce of grilled tomatoes, herbs, and local first-pressing olive oil; the ravioli *amari*, filled with local cheeses and mint; and the *mustazzoli* sweets, accompanied by moscato passito di Pantelleria wine.

In general Pantelleria's food marries different gastronomic heritages and products of land and sea, a union that creates a family of culinary delights. Herbs, vegetables, fruits, and olives seem to squeeze all the essences out of the soil they grow in and all the aromas out of the wind, to achieve an intense, concentrated flavor. The list of special dishes is long and covers the whole range from soup to sweets, but to me the best is the *couscous di pesce*—fruits of the land and the sea joined together by the generosity of Allah. Couscous is steamed in the aromatic broth of, and served with, a stew of many different fish (local grouper presid-

ing), and peppers, zucchini, and eggplant.

South of Gadir and down from Tracino begin, in seemingly unending procession, spectacular sea coves and grottoes—possibly the most beautiful I have ever seen. Because they are at the bottom of perpendicular cliffs, they can be admired and explored only from the sea. Boats can be chartered for the purpose, and we chose one named *Green Divers* to take us around the island. The young sailors on board (I guessed that none of them was older than twenty-five) expertly guided us in and out of the grottoes, all the while filling us with the lore and myths of caves and cliffs—the tales, like the caves themselves, becoming more colorful as the tour progressed. Close to and just around Pantelleria's southern tip (aptly named Dietro Isola, or Opposite Side of the Island) is another spot sought out by scuba divers and fishermen for the abundance and variety of its fish. Northwest of there is the Grotta di Sataria (Cave of Good Health), where, legend has it, Ulysses, though pining for Penelope, spent seven years with the lusty nymph Calypso. Calypso's grotto sports three successive pools with water temperatures progressing from tepid to warm to decidedly hot.

The cruise ended at sunset, and the crew, encouraging us to come again, promised that no matter how many times we circumnavigated the island, it would always be a new experience—it is so for them. We believed them. And next time we will carry more film and more sunscreen.

The day before leaving we went walking again with Di Fresco. Several roads lead to the interior—to the various hamlets and up to Monte Grande, the top of the island. From the heights we gazed down on all of Pantelleria, the hills and the valleys, the mosaic of green cultivated patches separated by walls of black rocks, white cubes of *dammusi* dotting the landscape, orchards of low-growing olive trees and grapevines.

“You are looking at the heart of the Mediterranean,” Di Fresco told us. “All the people who shaped Western civilization stopped and nested here. Pantelleria is a concentrate of Mediterranean.”

Another description, we thought, to add to Black Pearl of the Mediterranean, The Smaller One, and Daughter of the Wind. If we had our way, however, we would call Pantelleria The Unspoiled. ☼



FRANCO BARRAGALLO / GRAZIA NERI

Volcanic stone and a bump on the roof: a *dammuso*

perature is about 68°. Of course, it is warmer in summer, or when the southern sirocco blows up from the Sahara, and slightly colder with the storm-laden libeccio during the short—and still mild—winter months.

A GOOD road circles Pantelleria; by car the circuit can be made in a few hours, though many people elect to take the trip on foot, boasting afterward of the rewards of the adventure. The road runs sometimes at sea level but mostly up at the edge of high cliffs, rivaling the beauty of the Amalfi Coast road—and without the hairpin turns, the traffic jams, and the incessant honking of tour-bus horns.

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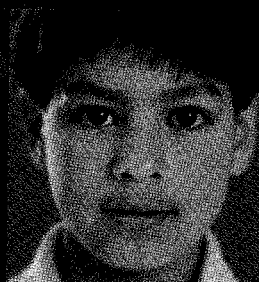
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UNWANTED SEX

by

STEPHEN SCHULHOFER

The law protects our property, labor, privacy, and other fundamental interests, but sexual autonomy—the right to choose whether and when to be sexually intimate with another person—is too often ignored

A YOUNG Illinois woman stopped to rest while biking along an isolated reservoir near the town of Carbondale. A stranger approached and struck up a conversation. After chatting with him for a few minutes, she got on her bicycle and started to leave. At that point the man, Joel Warren, put his hand on her shoulder. When she said, "No, I have to go now," he replied, "This will only take a minute. My girlfriend doesn't meet my needs." He added, "I don't want to hurt you."

Perhaps Warren only meant "We'll both enjoy this." But to the woman his comment sounded ominous, a hint of what he might do if she resisted him. In any event she had little time to consider nuances. Warren quickly lifted her up and carried her into the woods. He was six feet three inches tall and weighed 185 pounds. With no one else in sight, the young woman, who was only five feet two and weighed 100 pounds, did not attempt to scream or fight back, actions that she feared might prompt him to start choking or beating her. Once Warren had her hidden from view, he pulled off her pants, pushed up her shirt to expose her breasts, and subjected her to several acts of oral sex.

The police eventually identified Warren, prosecutors charged him with sexual assault, and a jury found him guilty.

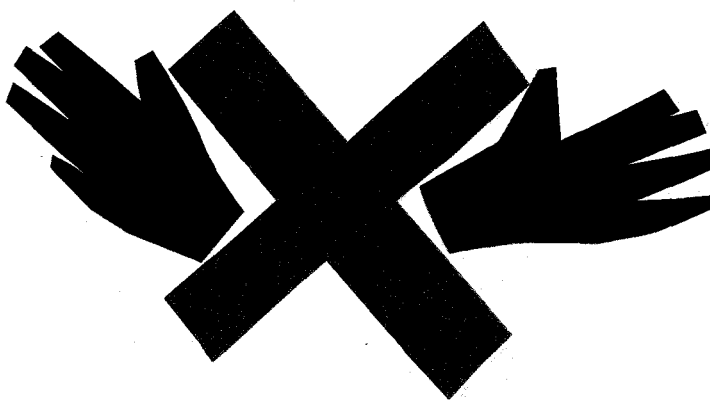
Yet an Illinois court set aside the conviction, saying that "the record is devoid of any attendant circumstances which suggest that complainant was compelled to submit." The year was 1983, but the court's approach remains very much with us.

Despite decades of public discussion and numerous statutory reforms before and since decisions like this one, the problem of defining and protecting our sexual boundaries has not been solved. The reasons are many. Sometimes

statutes are highly protective but ineffectively enforced. Whatever the law may say, jurors often assume that it is neither abnormal nor harmful for a man to make aggressive physical advances to a silent, passive, or openly reluctant woman—literally to sweep her off her feet, pull off her clothes, and penetrate her, all without any ex-

plicit indication of her consent. Some jurors assume that women who submit to these advances really want the sexual contact, that they could easily resist if they didn't, or that it would be unfair to punish a man who, after all, was only doing what (so they may think) nature intended.

But attitudes like these are no longer universal. Our sexual culture has changed. Prosecutors sometimes file charges and juries sometimes convict in cases that would have been laughed out of court twenty or thirty years ago. Yet the law it-



self continues to pose obstacles, blocking enforcement and denying remedies even when juries are prepared to condemn defendants' conduct as outrageous. With its many gaps and limits, the law even tends to validate and reinforce the strands within our culture that persist in seeing aggressive male sexuality as a biological given that poses no problems. Outmoded standards are especially evident in criminal law, but other remedies have many of the same failings.

Criminal law's most obvious weak spot is its continuing vagueness—a surprise after all the effort devoted to reform.

Rape law's most obvious weak spot is its continuing vagueness—a surprise after all the effort devoted to reform. This vagueness deters prosecutors from pursuing charges. And where criminal law is murky, the benefit of doubt usually goes to the defendant.

Standards remain extraordinarily murky, especially for determining when a man's behavior amounts to prohibited force or when a woman's conduct signals her consent. And where criminal law is murky, the benefit of the doubt usually goes to the defendant, in theory and often in practice. Acquittal rates are not noticeably lower for rape than they are for other serious felonies, but vague standards take their toll in other ways—detering prosecutors from pursuing charges and deterring victims from filing complaints.

The number of cases affected is difficult to estimate, but a 1992 survey by researchers at the University of Chicago provides a chilling perspective on the problem. The survey found that 22 percent of American women felt they had been forced to have sex, yet only three percent of American men said they had ever forced a woman to have sex. After discounting the possibility that the men or the women had lied, or that a few men were responsible for forcing many different women, the researchers concluded that most of the men simply did not realize that their sexual partners were unwilling. The researchers wrote, "There seems to be not just a gender gap but a gender chasm in perceptions of when sex was forced."

But criminal-law rules are sometimes quite clear—especially when they *exclude* certain kinds of abuse. In the fall of 1988 a young Montana woman wrote an alarming letter to her school board. She claimed that two years earlier, during her senior year in high school, the school's principal had forced her to submit to intercourse by threatening to block her graduation. After an investigation by the county prosecutor, the principal was charged with two acts of "sexual intercourse without consent," a felony under Montana law.

Like many other cases of rape, indecent assault, or sexual harassment, the Montana case bristled with credibility ques-

tions. But the Montana Supreme Court decided that the victim's story, even if true, could not support criminal charges. In Montana, as in most states, a sexual-assault charge normally requires proof that the abuser used physical force or threatened the victim with physical injury. Submission to avoid other kinds of harm is not enough to meet the statutory requirement of intercourse "without consent." The

court itself was appalled by the narrow scope of the statute. The judges dismissed the case "with a good deal of reluctance," noting their "strong condemnation of the alleged acts," and adding, "If we could rewrite the statutes to [punish] the alleged acts . . . we would willingly do so."

In a situation like the one in Montana, the victim has a hard choice to make. An exceptionally self-possessed young woman might just tell her principal to get lost. But if she submits to the man's sexual demands, then as far as criminal law is concerned, she has consented.

Rape laws have moved far since the days when women were required to resist "to the utmost." Today "reasonable" resistance is supposed to be sufficient. In the more progressive states no resistance is required at all. But in nearly all states intimidation short of physical threats is still treated as if it were mere "persuasion." When it succeeds, courts will usually say that the victim "consented."

We have all heard of cases in which the police, judge, or jury refused to believe that a woman's "no" really meant no. But the problems run deeper: even when jurors are convinced that a woman was unwilling, unwillingness is not enough. In the face of clearly expressed objections, intercourse is still not considered rape or any other form of felonious assault unless the assailant used physical force or threatened bodily injury. And the law's definition of physical force remains extremely strict. The physical acts of lifting a woman up or pushing her onto a bed and accomplishing sexual penetration usually aren't enough. The "force" must be something beyond the acts involved in intercourse—something that physically "compels" the woman to submit.

Because nearly all states require proof of physical force in prosecutions for rape or sexual assault, many serious abuses are classified as "nonviolent" and penal sanctions are assumed to be inappropriate. The abuses are not really nonviolent, of course. It is more accurate to say that they don't involve what the law regards as the *required kind* of force. The force they do involve is seen as normal and therefore permissible.

When men use only the "right kind" of force, prosecutors seldom bother to file charges. But sometimes such cases are brought to court, often because of an aggravating element such as the youth of the victim. When prosecutors bring

these cases, judges usually take the occasion to remind them that the force requirement will be strictly observed.

In a 1982 Mississippi case a fourteen-year-old girl I will call Sally was visiting her married sister, Elizabeth, who had recently separated from her husband, Dennis McQueen. One day Dennis stopped by Elizabeth's house and asked to take their two-year-old baby for a ride in his truck. Elizabeth did not want to leave Dennis alone with the baby, so she asked Sally to go along. When they returned, Sally was shaking and crying. She told her sister that Dennis had pulled off onto a deserted road and told her to get out of the truck. He told her to take off her clothes, lie down on the front seat, and put her legs up on his shoulders. Sally explained that she was scared of him because he had been drinking, and was afraid he was going to hurt her. She said she complied, crying throughout, as Dennis penetrated her and quickly had intercourse.

Because Mississippi then set the age of consent for intercourse at fourteen, Dennis McQueen was not charged with statutory rape. He was prosecuted for forcible rape, and the jury found him guilty. But the Mississippi Supreme Court set aside the conviction, because McQueen "did not threaten to injure [Sally], did not forcibly remove her from the truck, did not remove her clothes, and did not forcibly make her lie down in the truck." In 1992 an Ohio court reversed a similar conviction, invoking the same principle: no proof of physical force.

When the victim is only fourteen, most states would be able to charge a man like McQueen with statutory rape. Earlier this year Mississippi raised its age of consent—to sixteen. But when a young woman reaches the age of sixteen, or in some states eighteen, statutory-rape charges are no longer possible; the man is likely to escape any criminal sanction.

The narrow scope of contemporary criminal law becomes especially significant when a woman confronts sexual pressure from a man who holds professional power over her. Women face recurrent sexual demands from teachers, job supervisors, psychotherapists, doctors, and lawyers who misuse their authority to compel sexual submission. The best available estimates suggest that each year roughly a million working women are pressured to have sex with their job supervisors, and thousands (probably hundreds of thousands) of college women face unwanted sexual demands from their professors. Thousands more women submit each year to unwanted sex with their psychotherapists and physicians. Yet rape law offers no help in these situations, because the tactics the men use, though sometimes flagrantly coercive, are not physically violent. And civil suits, along with administrative penalties, often prove ineffective as well. Men who abuse their status or professional authority to coerce sexual compliance often face no significant sanctions.

Karen (not her real name), the mother of three children, sought legal help to escape a troubled marriage. She hired a

lawyer and paid him a \$2,500 retainer. Later, distraught and insecure, she went to see him to discuss her case. He locked his office door, unzipped his pants, and asked her for oral sex. Convinced that he would drop her case and abandon her if she refused, Karen complied, and on two later occasions she submitted to his demands for intercourse. After several months she could no longer cope with the lawyer's sexual demands. She fired him and sued for malpractice. But in a 1990 decision an Illinois court said that she had no case, even if the lawyer had exploited her vulnerability and used his professional position to coerce her consent. The court ruled that lawyers can be held accountable for malpractice only when their misconduct has an adverse effect on their clients' legal problems. Emotional harm from coerced submission to repugnant sexual demands was, the court said, "insufficient"; the woman had no case because she "did not claim that her legal position in the divorce proceedings was harmed."

Alcohol can add another dimension to the problem. A widely reported 1996 trial involved a woman in upstate New York who had been drinking heavily on a date and passed out in a restaurant bathroom. Her date, waiting for her outside, fell asleep in his pickup truck. Meanwhile, five men carried the woman from the bathroom to a booth, where they undressed her. All five then allegedly raped her, left her in the booth, and returned to their beer and sandwiches.

The five men admitted the acts of intercourse, pleaded guilty to minor misdemeanor charges, and were fined \$840 each. But after a political uproar over the leniency of the sentences, a special prosecutor managed to get the guilty pleas set aside and brought the first of the defendants to trial on felony rape charges. At the trial, *The New York Times* reported, the man's lawyer argued that "if the woman had consumed enough alcohol to be helpless, as she testified, then she could not be sure that she had not consented to sex." He didn't say, of course, that the men should be sure that she *had* consented. Genuine willingness on the part of the woman simply isn't required. The jury acquitted the man.

Criminal-law reforms often leave a false impression. For example, resistance requirements have supposedly been restricted or abolished. But when a woman says no, clearly and insistently, a man can still roll on top of her, remove her clothes, and penetrate her, all without committing rape. The obstacle in such a case is not conflicting versions of the truth or questions of credibility. The man can admit to the facts, more or less with impunity. His conduct remains perfectly legal, because he has not used what the law calls force—that is, physical power *in addition to* the force that may be intrinsic to intercourse.

The upshot is that resistance requirements remain in effect even where the law says they have been abolished. A woman's right to bodily integrity and sexual autonomy—her right to sexual choice—simply does not exist until she begins to scream or fight back physically.

Sexual-harassment suits provide an alternative for women who are coerced by tactics that stop short of physical force. It would be natural to assume that sexual-harassment laws fill the gap left by criminal law's strict force requirement, because these laws are so often portrayed as exceedingly restrictive. Vocal critics of these laws imply that they impose draconian sanctions on any man who dares to use off-color language or express the slightest hint of sexual interest in the presence of an exceptionally sensitive woman. In fact sexual-harassment laws do nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they remain limited in their coverage and effectiveness.

With few exceptions, sexual-harassment laws, state and federal, extend protection only to employees and students. They are no help at all when a patient is pressured for sex by her doctor or when a client in a divorce proceeding is coerced by a lawyer who threatens to stop working on her case if she won't meet his sexual demands.

Even in the workplace, sexual-harassment laws are at best only partly effective. The laws apply if a supervisor or a professor is stupid enough to tell a woman that he will hurt her career unless she submits to him. But sexual-harassment laws often ignore the pressure that lurks beneath the surface of sexual demands from a professor or a job supervisor. And even when an explicit threat can be proved, remedies are limited. The law permits civil damage suits against universities and companies, and such suits are often well publicized. What is less well known is that even when clear abuses are committed, the offender isn't personally liable for damages; sexual-harassment penalties apply only against the university or the business as an entity.

A series of Supreme Court decisions last spring made clear that women subjected to sexual harassment can sue even when they have not been fired or denied a promotion. But at the same time the Court created new defenses that will permit many corporations and school districts to escape responsibility for harassment by their employees, and it left in place the rule that the employees themselves are not personally liable. President Bill Clinton's position in the Paula Jones suit is an exception, because a public official can be sued personally, under a separate set of federal laws, if he or she uses governmental power to violate a citizen's civil rights. However, the ordinary supervisor or teacher who uses his position to gain sexual favors usually incurs no civil or criminal liability, even for acts blatantly interfering with the sexual autonomy of a subordinate.

THIS gap in the law is puzzling, but not simple to fill. It is a daunting task to define, clearly and specifically, what an appropriate system for protection of sexual autonomy should look like. It is not easy to set the boundaries for permissible conduct when positions of authority, threats, promises, alcohol, and abuses of trust have some effect on sexual interaction.

A prison guard's power clearly prevents an inmate from choosing freely whether to accept or refuse a sexual proposal, but do we say the same about a college professor and a nineteen-year-old student taking his course? Do we say the same about a corporate vice-president and a junior executive working in another division? There are problems in such relationships, to be sure. But if sexual interaction is ruled legally out of bounds every time one of the parties has any possible source of power over the other, our opportunities to find companionship and sexual intimacy will shrink drastically. To create a legal barrier to every relationship not formed on the purely neutral ground of the singles bar or the church social would be pathetic and absurd.

A woman too drunk to stand up should not be expected to resist physically or to protest explicitly—even if she downed all the drinks of her own accord and knew exactly what was in them. But do we say the same about a woman who has had just two or three drinks? Should we conclude that a woman's consent is invalid if she said "yes" because she was feeling relaxed and uninhibited after drinking a glass of wine? The law's willingness to find consent in cases of severe alcohol impairment should be considered intolerable, but a standard suggesting that rape occurred whenever alcohol played a part in sexual consent would be intolerable as well.

Respect for sexual autonomy requires safeguards against abuse and exploitation. But—equally important—it requires that the law protect our freedom to seek emotional intimacy and sexual fulfillment with willing partners. Despite decades of discussion and years of ambitious feminist reforms, adequate protection of sexuality remains elusive, in part because freedom from unwanted sex and the freedom to seek mutually desired sex sometimes seem to be in tension. A workable notion of sexual autonomy appears to require compromises and balancing—the kind of chore that lawyers and academics often regard as a technical problem of "line-drawing." But the problem is neither simple nor unimportant. What is at stake is nothing less than women's bodily security and every person's right to control the boundaries of his or her own sexual experience.

KNOWING CONSENT WHEN WE SEE IT

INTERCOURSE often "happens" after voluntary hugging, kissing, and sexual touching, without coercive threats but also without either of the parties ever saying "Yes, let's agree to have sex now." In one of the most frequent scenarios the woman remains silent and relatively passive; she may even push the man's hands away several times or say "No, don't." Traditional rape laws permit a defense of "consent," but they don't say what consent is.

For many, the often-heard feminist view—that "no" means no—now seems obvious and uninteresting. In fact it is

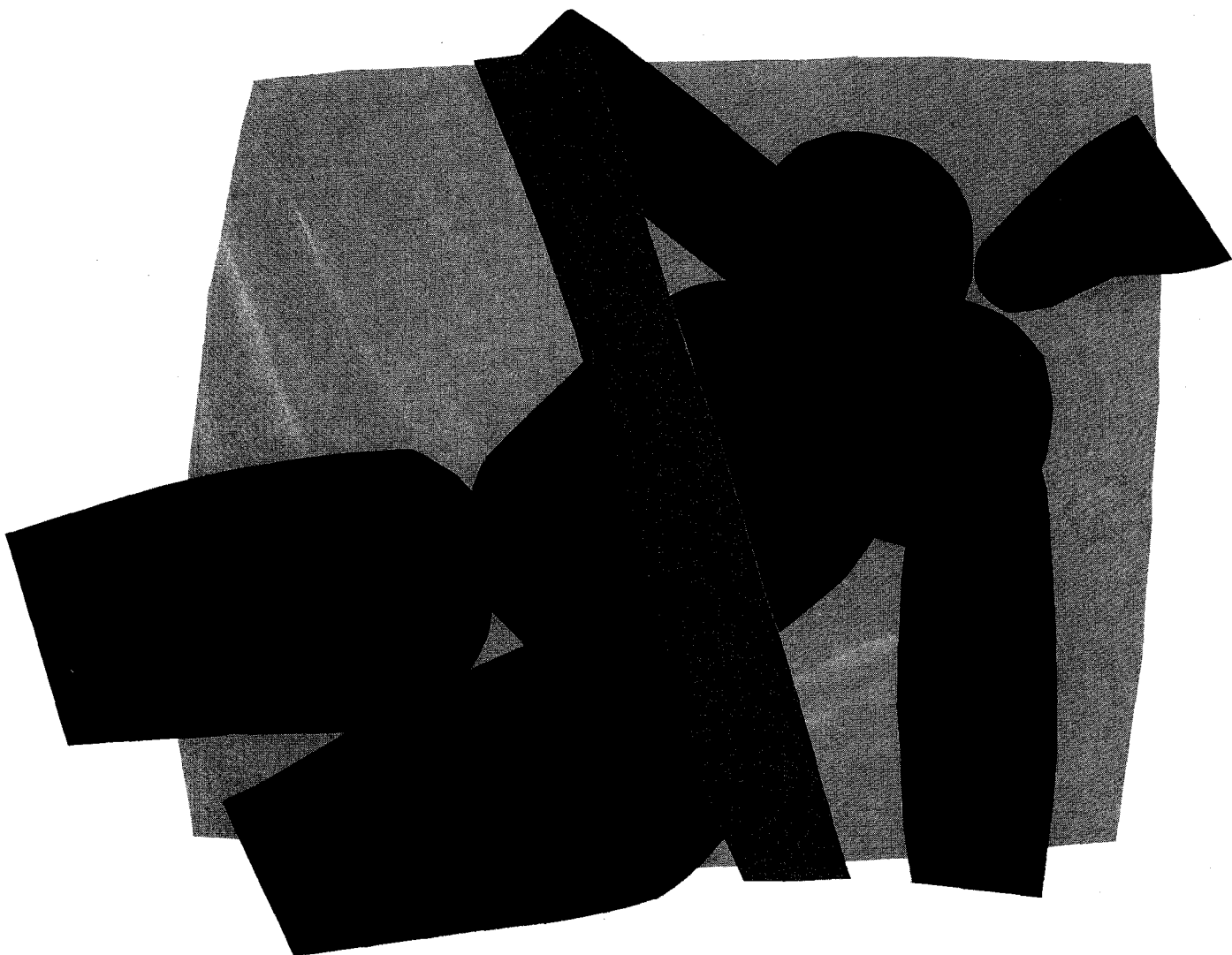
neither. By repeating the mantra “no’ means no,” anti-rape activists have sensitized many men and made some progress in changing assumptions about how women express interest in sex. But beneath the surface, in the messy, emotionally ambiguous real world of dating, petting, and sexual exploration, “no” doesn’t always mean no.

A 1988 survey of undergraduates at Texas A & M University presents a detailed look at this problem. More than 600 women were asked whether they had ever engaged in acts of token resistance when they really wanted to have sex. Thirty-nine percent of the women reported that they sometimes said no even though they “had every intention to and were willing to engage in sexual intercourse.” Of the sexually experienced women, 61 percent said that they had done so. Though these women were willing to engage in intercourse eventually, they didn’t necessarily want the men to disregard their “no” and force them to submit right away; many wanted their dates to wait or “talk me into it.” But when a woman’s “no” is equivocal, it means that her date, if he reads her intention correctly, should continue to press her for sex, perhaps in a physically assertive way. In fact,

some of the women said that they told a date no because they “want[ed] him to be more physically aggressive.”

An obvious concern regarding this study is that the Texas A & M students may not be typical. The authors cautioned that the men tend to endorse gender roles that were prevalent in the 1950s. But subsequent studies elsewhere have reported strikingly similar findings, with no regional differences. A 1994 study of students at universities in Hawaii, Texas, and the Midwest found that 38 percent of the women sometimes said no when they meant yes. In a 1995 study at Penn State 37 percent of women reported having said no when they meant yes. For most women, most of the time, “no” does mean no. But sometimes it means “maybe” or “try harder.” Sometimes, for some women, it means “get physical.”

Some supporters of rape-law reform prefer to set aside these empirical findings. They probably fear that evidence of this sort will only reinforce society’s willingness to tolerate male behavior that poses enormous risks for women. But sexual ambivalence and miscommunication, though they undoubtedly exist, do not automatically justify permissive legal standards. They need not dictate impunity for



men who ignore women's verbal protests. Indeed, it is precisely because of these inconvenient realities that legal requirements such as "consent" and "reasonableness" solve so few of the difficulties.

THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

DESPITE their many disputes over theory and tactics, critics of existing rape law largely agree in tracing its inadequacies to its overly narrow conception of force. Protection of autonomy—a woman's right to make her own sexual choices—is not ignored; it remains the ultimate goal and a frequent rhetorical theme. Yet few reformers attempt to make autonomy or consent a formal legal requirement.

One reason is practical. Many anti-rape activists worry that evidence about the victim's personal life might become relevant and that extensive cross-examination of the victim might have to be permitted if legal proof focuses on her state of mind rather than on the defendant's behavior. There is a more basic point as well: a concern that autonomy simply has no meaning independent of some notion of coercion. Through all the reform struggles of the past, reformers and their critics alike shared the assumption that autonomy means—and can only mean—freedom from force or duress.

As a result, most contemporary reformers stress autonomy only in their rhetoric; they avoid making autonomous choice a formal requirement. Instead the leading proposals for change urge two distinct but complementary reforms. The first is to insist that "no" means no. The second aims to bridge the gaps in existing legal protection by expanding traditional notions of force, coercion, or duress. Both ap-

proaches have led the reform effort to unexpected dead ends.

The argument that a woman's "no" should always establish her unwillingness remains intensely controversial. But even if that argument is accepted, as it should be, it solves few of the problems. For example, a "no"-means-no rule doesn't clarify the standards of behavior that should apply *after* the woman says no. Is her "no" always final, or can a man ask again? Can he try to change her mind—and if so, how? Those problems return us to the elusive question of what should count as legally sufficient force. Winning legal recognition

for the principle that "no" means no will not solve this puzzle. Rape-law reformers have an answer. They hope to overcome the remaining problems by extending the definition of "force" from physical violence to other kinds of coercion. One obstacle here is the common practice of limiting rape prosecutions to cases involving an explicit threat to use force. But shifting the legal analysis to focus on implicit threats doesn't solve the problems; it only restates them. Courts still must identify some conduct that amounts to an unstated threat. If the implicit-threat standard requires evidence tied to the defendant's behavior at the time of the incident, verbal and physical details (flexing of the biceps, actual choking) will remain crucially important.

The problem is that even when implicit threats can count as force, the standard remains artificial because it focuses narrowly, in snapshot fashion, on specific comments and gestures made at the time of a rape incident. To escape that narrow focus, courts could consider the entire context, including the setting of the incident, the possibilities for running away or calling for help, the prior relationship between the parties, their relative size and strength, and so on.

This broader approach has clear advantages, but it poses a large problem. By shifting the force requirement from a man's threatening actions to his *capacity* to inflict harm, it makes the line between voluntary encounters and coercive sex hard to locate. If disparity in size, strength, and fighting ability is sufficient to establish force, then rape is implicit in most heterosexual relationships.

No court will permit a standard like this to extend to the limits of its logic, of course. The more serious concern is that a principle of this sort will seldom be used in practice. As long as the contextual approach fails to separate, in a roughly predictable way, what is legitimate from what is abusive, courts will bend over backward to ensure that men are not convicted of a serious offense unless they had fair warning that their conduct was criminal. Prosecutors, juries, and appellate courts will have no clear guidance and, much worse, no strong imperative to act. Underenforcement will be the all-too-foreseeable result.

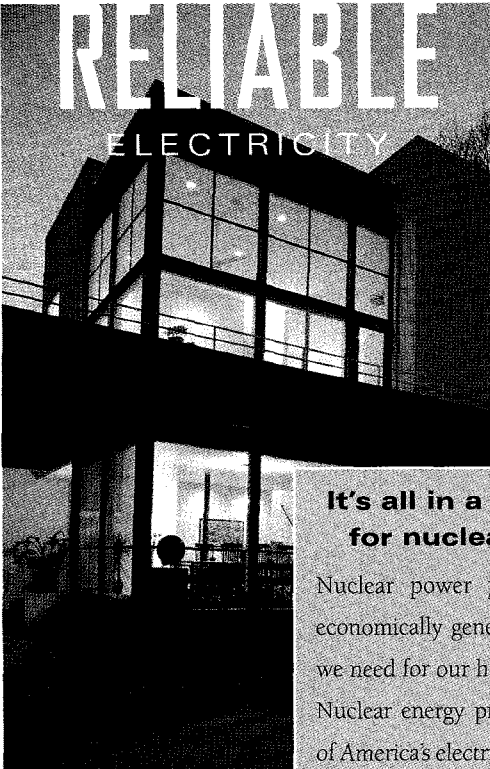
Courts that accept the implicit-threat and inherent-capacity-to-harm standards keep those approaches within bounds by invoking a "reasonableness" limitation. An implicit threat or an intimidating capacity to inflict harm counts as force, and the woman does not have to resist physically—but her fears of injury must be considered "reasonable."

The reasonable-fear requirement seems a plausible limitation. Courts understandably consider it unfair to convict

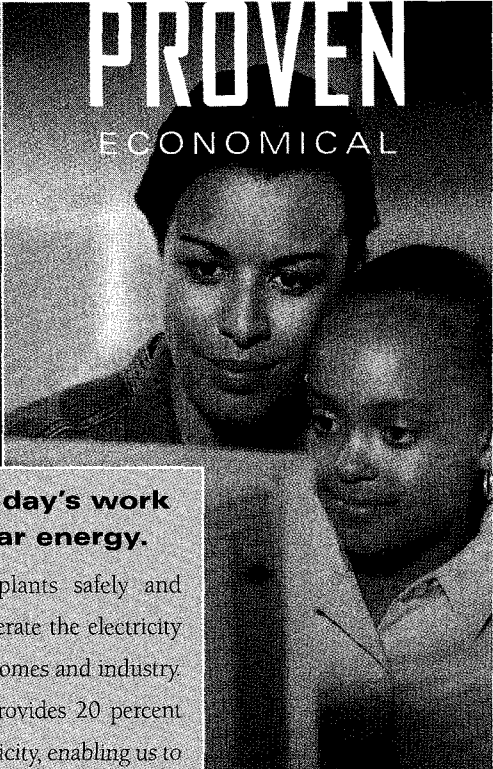
A person may take property by force (robbery), coercive threats (extortion), stealth (larceny), or deception (fraud and false pretenses) and be punished for stealing. But a person may use the very same tactics to rape a woman and be found innocent of wrongdoing.

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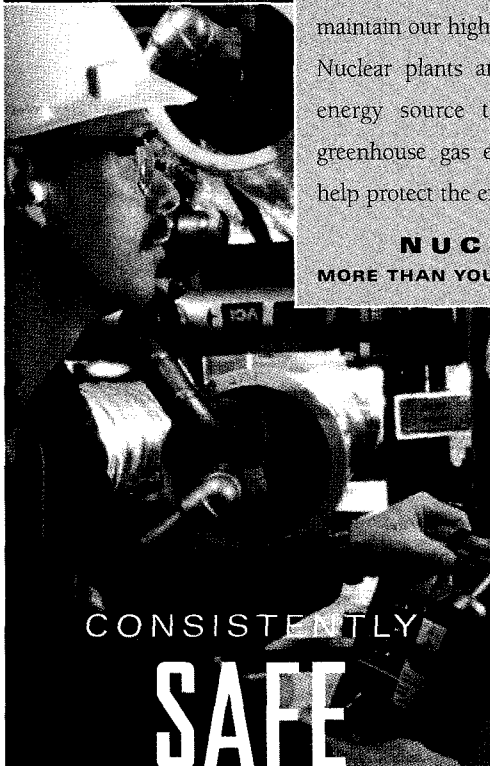


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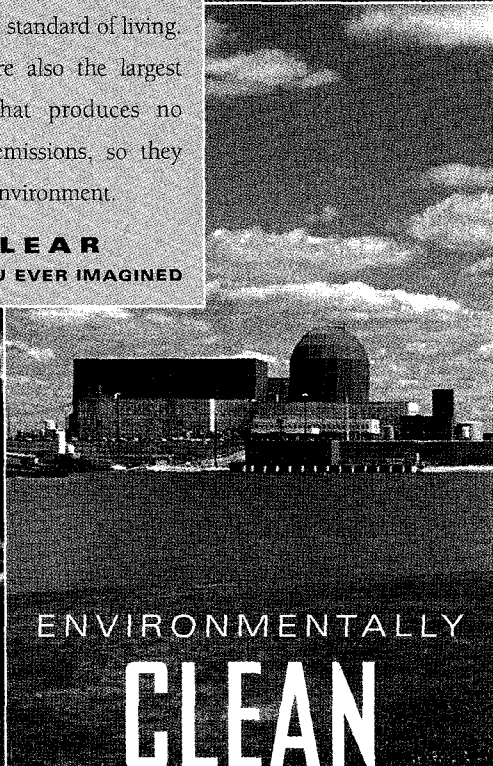
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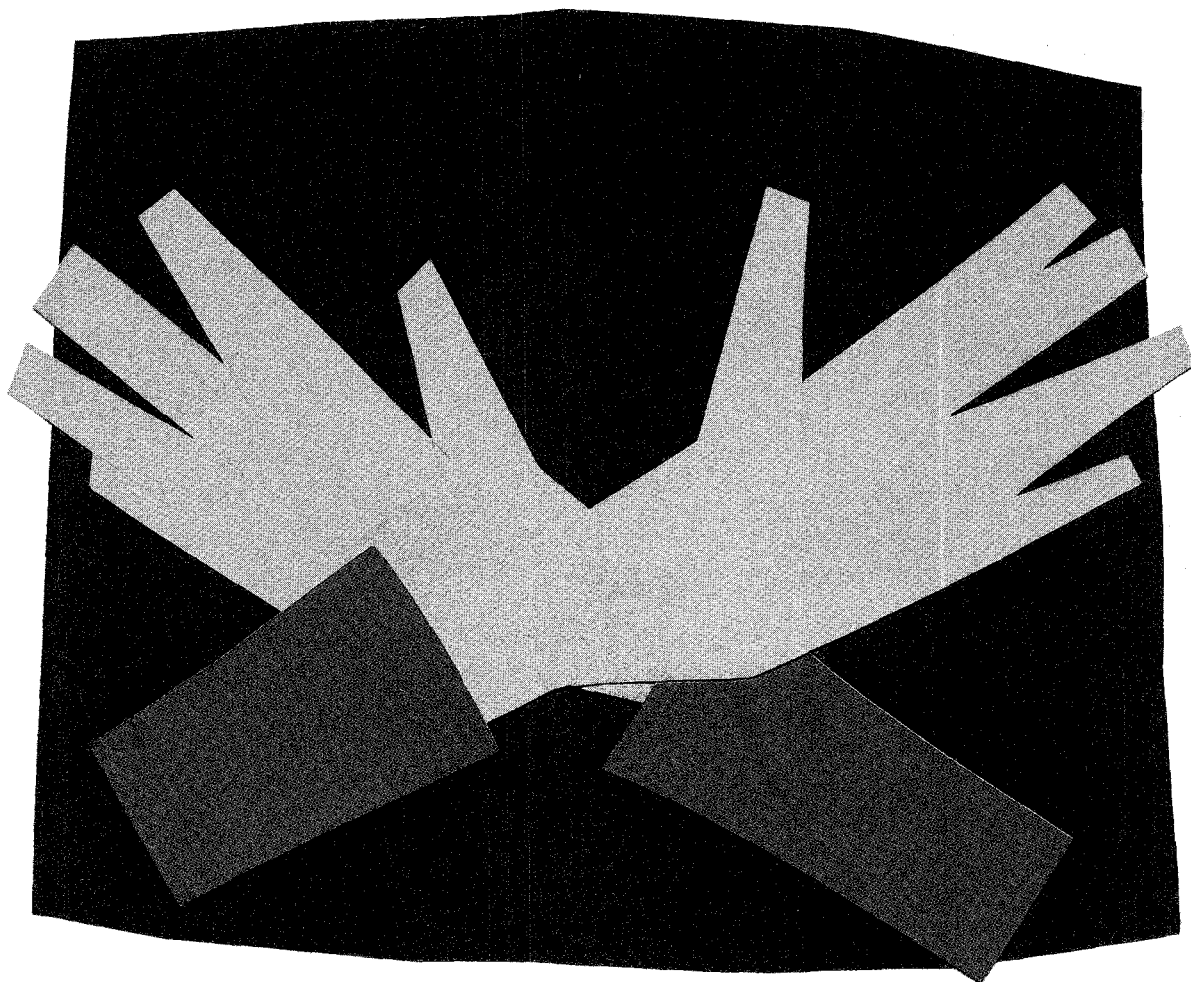
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a man of rape when a woman who has cooperated in a sexual act has done so because of an unreasonable fear. Yet a reasonableness standard destroys most of the gains that the implicit-threat standard was supposed to achieve.

Reasonableness standards are common in law, and often work tolerably well, especially in highway driving and other areas of behavior in which norms of conduct are widely shared and moderately well understood. When norms are more controversial and stakes are high, as in the use of deadly force in self-defense, a general standard of reasonableness is seldom sufficient; the law uses elaborate rules to specify the kinds of threats that are serious enough to justify a lethal response, the circumstances that require the threatened person to shoot in defense rather than retreat, and so on.

In the case of sexual encounters, perceptions of danger can differ widely, and appropriate norms of behavior are intensely disputed. Our culture is at best ambivalent about whether a bit of physical aggression is attractive or unacceptable in male sexual initiatives. In these conditions a reasonableness standard doesn't just keep the implicit-threat approach within commonsense bounds. Instead it undercuts the effort to make traditional requirements of explicit force more realistic. A reasonableness standard does little to challenge our culture's willingness to condone men's physically assertive sexual advances. And a reasonableness standard

makes it all the more difficult to see why that culture—and the behavior it encourages—poses dangers for women.

As a result, the reasonableness standard leaves legal requirements almost as narrow or unpredictable as they were before. Without some limitation, courts feel, reforms that extend force requirements from explicit to implicit threats and from actual conduct to inherent capabilities would have intolerable scope: they would render virtually all heterosexual sex coercive and therefore criminal. But with a limitation to "reasonable" fears, the move to include implicit threats and inherent capacities as forms of force ultimately achieves very little. The effort to stretch legal concepts of force cannot achieve what is needed—the recognition that sexual autonomy should be protected directly.

THE MISSING ENTITLEMENT— SEXUAL AUTONOMY

SEXUAL autonomy, like other rights, has two facets. The first is active—the right to decide on the kind of life one wishes to live and the kinds of activities one wishes to pursue, including sexual interaction with others who are willing. The second is the reverse—the right to safeguard and exclude, the freedom to refuse to have sex with any person at any time, for any reason or for no reason at all.

Protection from coercion and the protection of autonomy are closely related and thus sometimes hard to tell apart. Existing rape laws and all the leading reform efforts add to this confusion by treating the two concerns as if they were two sides of the same coin. But the differences between them are crucial. Physical coercion interferes with autonomy, but many interferences with autonomy involve no coercion, physical or otherwise.

These distinctions are familiar when interests other than sexuality are at stake. A person may take \$100 from me by physical force, or he may take it by coercive but nonphysical threats—for example, if he threatens to spread false rumors that will ruin my business. A person may also get control over my property illegally without coercing me at all. He may take my \$100 by stealth, or he may persuade me to give it to him by falsely promising something in return. In these cases his actions are illegal but not coercive. If our law of theft punished only coercive takings, we might try to say that takings by stealth or deception were in effect coercive—but we would know that the language was strained. The law of theft requires no such verbal contortions. It simply punishes takings by force (robbery), by coercive threats (extortion), by stealth (larceny), by breach of trust (embezzlement), and by deception (fraud and false pretenses). All these methods violate my rights because they impair—without adequate justification—my control over my property.

Much the same can be said for nearly all our most fundamental interests. The law protects our control over our labor and our votes, our right to receive honest services from professionals, and our privacy, including confidential information about ourselves. Contexts are important, and the details of legal rights vary, but the general point holds: the law protects our autonomy in regard to these interests—our freedom to retain them or dispose of them however we may choose. It prohibits interference with meaningful choice by force, by stealth, and, usually, by breach of trust or deception. The law does not strain to say that all these interferences are coercive; it simply treats them as impermissible infringements on the liberty and self-determination to which every person is entitled.

Sexual autonomy is treated differently. Few of our other personal rights and liberties—perhaps only our right to life itself—are as important as our right to decide whether and when we will become sexually intimate with another person. The emotional vulnerability and potential physical danger attached to sexual interaction make effective legal safeguards at least as important for sex as they are for the sale of land or the purchase of a used car. Strangely,

in the list of fundamental entitlements that the law grants us as free and independent beings, sexual autonomy is somehow left out.

There is nothing intrinsic to sexuality that requires this constricted pattern of protection. Violent threats are just one possible source of a defect in consent, and the law already recognizes a few others in the context of sexual relations. The best-known example is immaturity: the law has long prohibited consensual intercourse with a girl who is below the legally prescribed age of consent. The law likewise punishes acts of intercourse with a woman who is sleeping, unconscious, mentally incompetent, or unaware that a sexual act is being performed.

Traditionally, the law draws no formal distinction between cases of physical violence and exceptional cases like the ones just mentioned; all are classified as rape. Yet our terminology keeps force in the forefront. In ordinary language “rape” means the imposition of intercourse by force. The terminology influences assumptions about the proper scope of rape or assault, for judges, legislators, ordinary citizens, and committed anti-rape activists alike. Rather than asking whether certain sexual advances unjustifiably impair freedom of choice, we have asked only whether the conduct is so bad that it is equivalent to violent compulsion—whether it is tantamount to rape.

Sexual autonomy should not exist so precariously. Attention should no longer focus exclusively on whether a man’s behavior is aberrant, egregious, or potentially lethal. Instead the proper questions for debate are whether each participant in a sexual encounter had a meaningful opportunity to choose, and whether a meaningful choice was in fact made before sexual penetration occurred. In connection with criminal sanctions the law must also consider whether the defen-

Even in the most progressive states, where “freely given” consent to a sexual act is required, the law still makes no effort to define what kinds of nonphysical tactics amount to coercion. As a result prosecutors continue to insist on evidence of physical force.

dant can fairly be considered culpable. But culpability cannot be confined to cases of aberrant physical violence; there is ample reason to find criminal responsibility when, for example, a man commits an act of sexual penetration *knowing* that he doesn’t have the woman’s consent.

Posing the issues in these terms will not by itself resolve them. Meaningful choice and the limits of permissible interference with autonomy must be determined by paying close attention to contexts. We have to consider the dynamics of sexual interaction in different settings and the possi-

ble impairment of decision-making capabilities under different circumstances. We have to consider as well the possibility of significant differences between the scope of protection appropriate for sexuality and the scope of protection appropriate for other interests protected by current laws. But the issue must be framed in terms of sexual autonomy itself, not in terms of a futile search for something we can squeeze under the rubric of "force."

Once the focus of legal concern shifts from force to sexual autonomy, a much broader range of individual misconduct is called into question. When one person interferes with another person's ability to choose freely in a sexual encounter, legal intervention is appropriate even in the absence of force—just as it is when one person impairs another person's autonomy in relation to property rights, privacy, or other entitlements recognized by law.

The starting point for any consideration of autonomy is the question of whether a person's consent is coerced. A focus on sexual autonomy enables us to distinguish legitimate inducements from threats or other sorts of pressure (sometimes in the form of offers) that should be criminally punishable.

Without explicit threats or other improper inducements, freedom of choice can still be affected by the distribution of power in particular settings. For sexual relationships between men or women and their teachers, job supervisors, psychotherapists, doctors, dentists, and lawyers, legal restrictions are needed even in the absence of explicit threats.

The capacity for meaningful choice can also be impaired by deception. Yet currently the law places no restrictions whatsoever on the use of fraudulent tactics to obtain consent to sex. Proposals for insisting on the same level of honesty in sexual exchange that we require as a matter of course in property transactions are usually dismissed as impractical or wildly out of touch with reality. At least in the case of egregiously deceptive inducements, the absence of legal sanctions is hard to justify.

Even if a relationship is completely free of threats, deception, disparities of power, or breaches of trust, sexual contact obviously violates autonomy when one of the parties does not consent. But the question of what counts as an expression of consent is intensely contested: Does "no" always mean no? Is physical resistance necessary to make clear the ab-

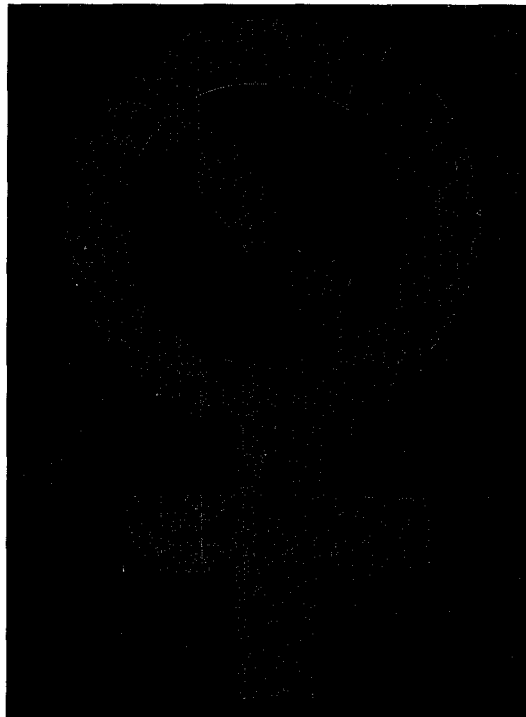
sence of consent? And can we infer willingness from silence or ambivalence—from *not* saying no?

COURTS that find consent despite a verbal protest will inevitably find consent if the woman didn't protest or physically resist. But even courts and juries that treat a verbal no as sufficient to signal unwillingness are likely to consider a woman's silence equivalent to consent. Only a handful of states have taken the next step and insisted that consent to sex requires "affirmative and freely given permission." To most courts, a refusal to infer consent when a woman lies still and utters no protest is overly fastidious and wildly unrealistic.

If a woman is unconscious or asleep, of course, her silence can't be equated with sexual willingness; a man who penetrates her will be guilty of rape. But when the woman is *able* to say no, the usual assumption is that if she remains silent, she must be willing; otherwise she would object. Or if she isn't really willing, it is considered fair to treat her as if she were. Consent may be actual, or it may be a justified fiction. The episode on the Illinois bike path is just one of countless illustrations of this point of view. The court that reversed the man's sexual-assault conviction said that the woman's "failure to resist when it was within her power to do so conveys the impression of consent."

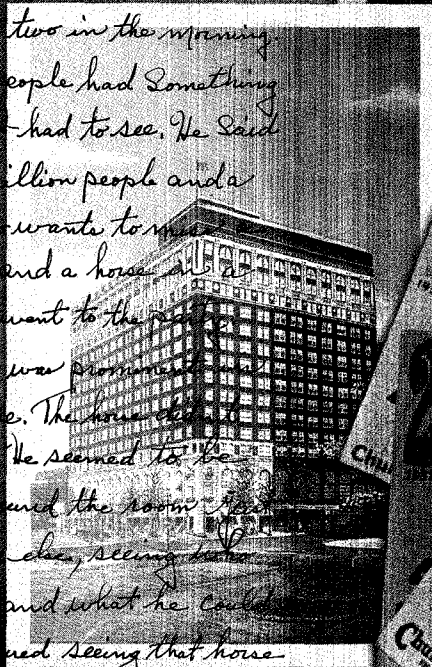
The soundness of requiring some protest is usually accepted without question. Yet it is by no means clear that women in such situations do have a fair chance to protest. The Illinois woman, for example, was a foot shorter and weighed eighty-five pounds less than her attacker, and was startled by a stranger in an isolated setting, with no one else in sight. Her silence might mean enthusiastic willingness, but it is *at least* equally likely that she was terrified and paralyzed by fear.

The silence-means-consent assumption draws support even from some rape-law reformers. They worry that treating passivity or ambivalence as nonconsent will patronize women, who should be assumed to be capable of asserting their own wishes. But we seldom think it patronizing to insist on permission, not just silence, when the interests affected are ones that men can easily recognize. When a doctor asks if a patient wants a probe inserted into his rectum to check for tumors, the patient's silence is not assumed to indicate consent. The patient's willingness must be made explicit. Yet rape law doesn't require us to obtain actual per-



*Eddie Arcaro slept here
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mission for intercourse; it prohibits penetration only when there is clear evidence of *nonconsent*.

An insistence on proof of unwillingness has a certain logic within the framework of existing law. It serves not only to ensure that potential lawbreakers have fair warning but also to keep the criminal prohibition focused on conduct involving force. A requirement of actual permission, however, would not shift the burden of proof to the defendant or require doubts to be resolved against him. A defendant could be convicted only if he knew he did not have the woman's affirmative permission or if he was criminally negligent in thinking that he did. But silence, ambiguous behavior, and the absence of a clearly expressed preference would be evidence that affirmative consent was absent; they would no longer suggest, as they do under present law, that a defendant did nothing wrong in forging ahead to intercourse.

The significance of equivocal behavior should in effect be reversed. Equivocal behavior should reinforce prosecutors' claims that consent was absent, rather than serving (as under current law) to buttress defense claims that the woman never signaled her unwillingness. No standard can eliminate all factual uncertainty or swearing contests between witnesses. And some defendants would continue to avoid liability simply by telling elaborate lies. But facts that will often be quite clear—verbal protests, ambivalence, passivity, or silence—would by themselves be sufficient to establish an unambiguous offense against personal autonomy and an unambiguous basis for punishment. The important point is to shift the emphasis of the consent inquiry away from concern over whether the woman explicitly communicated her opposition. Sexual intimacy involves a profound intrusion on the physical and emotional integrity of the individual. Nothing less than positive willingness, clearly communicated, should ever count as consent.

In the few states—New Jersey, Wisconsin, Washington—where consent now means actual permission, not just the absence of protests, consent need not be in writing, of course. Permission can be communicated, these states' laws provide, by "actual words or conduct indicating freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse." Because body language can still count as an expression of consent, this approach (for better or worse) doesn't eliminate all the uncertainties of sexual communication. A world without ambiguity in erotic interaction might be a very dull place, after all. But ambiguity is also dangerous, especially for women who justifiably want the freedom to explore intimacy and sexual contact without losing their right to stop matters short of intercourse.

To minimize the risks, many reformers propose that nothing less than verbal permission—an explicit yes—should ever count as consent to intercourse. The drawbacks of such a rule are evident. If body language cannot be a legally effective way to express consent, many common modes of indicating a desire for intercourse will have to change radically, or—more likely—the verbal-permission requirement will

simply be ignored by spouses, lovers, dating partners, and perhaps courts and juries as well.

To signal affirmative consent, body language must be unambiguous. Sexual petting does not in itself imply permission for intercourse, any more than does inviting a man in for coffee or permitting him to pay for dinner. A woman who engages in intense sexual foreplay should always retain the right to say no. If she doesn't say no, and if her silence is combined with passionate kissing, hugging, and sexual touching, it is usually sensible to infer actual willingness. A verbal-permission rule would reduce the risks of a possible misunderstanding in this situation, but at the cost of imposing a degree of formality and artificiality on human interactions in which spontaneity is especially important.

The verbal-yes rule thus seems many steps beyond the level of regulation that contemporary courts are likely to entertain. And a verbal-yes rule is not mandated by a commitment to respect sexual autonomy. The central point is that sexual intimacy must be chosen freely. The first priorities are to stop insisting on proof of the woman's opposition, and to stop requiring her to take actions clear enough to overcome the law's presumption that she is always interested in sex—at any time, in any place, with any person. The legal standard must move away from the demand for unambiguous evidence of her protests and insist instead that the man have affirmative indications that she chose to participate. So long as her choice is clearly expressed, by words or conduct, her right to control her sexuality is respected.

These important steps are not sufficient by themselves, however. In states that now require affirmative, "freely given" consent, the law still makes no effort to define which kinds of pressure prevent consent from being given "freely." Experience under New Jersey's relatively progressive rule has demonstrated that when the concepts of force and coercion are left undefined, prosecutors continue to insist on evidence of physical intimidation. The law must stop equating force with physical violence.

Without this change of focus, clear-cut abuses will continue to slip through the gaps in existing law. Men today are free, as in the Illinois case, to take advantage of strangers they accost in isolated settings. Lawyers in most states can exact sexual cooperation from clients who depend on them for essential help in divorce, child-custody, and criminal cases. A man in a bar or a fraternity house can get a woman drunk, undress her, and penetrate her before she can resist. In cases like these men continue to escape conviction by claiming that they never threatened physical violence and that the woman failed to make her unwillingness clear. Only when our laws and culture acknowledge the importance of affirmative, uncoerced permission will we afford women and men the right to control the boundaries of their own sexual lives. Until then sexual autonomy will remain the missing, unprotected entitlement. ☞

The Ships of Port Revel

by JOHN McPHEE

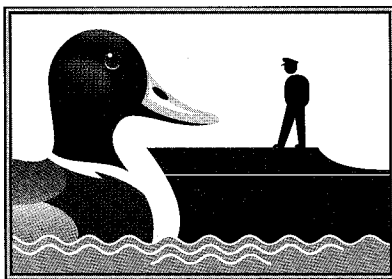
*On a pond in France, skippers
of the world's merchant fleets go to school*

THE captain says, "Midships." I say, "Midships." He says, "Starboard Twenty." I say, "Starboard Twenty." He says, "Dead Slow Ahead." I say, "Dead Slow Ahead." He is a licensed master of ships of any gross tons upon oceans. I am his helmsman, third mate, engineer. My talent consists of following orders. "Hard to Starboard." "Hard to Starboard." We leave the Suez Canal.

The Suez Canal runs along the east sides of Manhattan Island and Staten Island from Cape Horn to Cape Fear. On Range 195 you head from the Bay of Biscay to the steel island of Ras Tanura. This is Port Revel, in Dauphiné, near Grenoble, where ship captains and ship pilots from all over the world take a five-and-a-half-day course in ship handling for a room-board-tuition fee of \$15,000. Since the

1960s nearly 5,000 skippers and pilots have come here for advanced training, in classes as small as four and no larger than eight. Port Revel is a pond in the foothills of the Alps. It was dug for potter's clay by Trappist monks in the sixteenth century, and was later used to raise fish. "Ease to Ten." "Ease to Ten." "Midships." It would dumbfound those monks to see what is happening on their pond today.

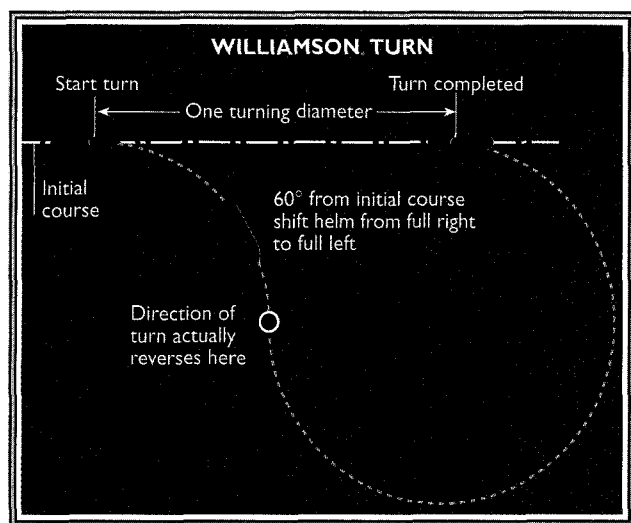
The ship *Normandie* is traveling west. The *Brittany* is docking in a forty-knot wind. The *Europe* is doing a Williamson turn. The *Normandie* is new, and was built to carry containers on a fast-ship hull. The skippers agreed after their first two hours on the pond that these model ships behave very much in the way that big ones do. They are not canoes. They feel like ships. They are replicas of real and specific ships, to scale, with bulbous bows and working anchors. The model tanker *Europe* is forty feet long. It is a mini-clone of the *Esso Europa*, one thousand feet long. My canoe at home weighs fifty pounds and turns on a centime in ponds. The model *Europe* weighs 41,013 avoirdupois pounds. You don't turn it with a paddle. When it moves, and develops what the instructor Philippe Delesalle



refers to as "the inertia," it does not want to stop. He says it is "like a large lorry with a moped engine and no brakes." He has warned us: "If you try to treat them as toys, they don't like that and they won't forgive you. Don't use your hands to avoid collisions. You can break your wrists. Remember, this is a finger, not a fender." In an earlier class

one ship hit another so hard that its bow broke off under the other ship's hull. The pond, with its kilometer of shoreline, represents three miles by two and a half miles of confined navigable water. When we go half ahead for a bit, and get up to the scale equivalent of six or seven knots, the skippers had better be thinking at least five ship lengths ahead—figuring in ship lengths their stopping distance. Five ship lengths at full scale is almost a mile. To do a Jordan stop you turn hard left or hard right—increasing greatly your underwater resistance—and then go full astern. You stop like a skier.

My captain at the moment is Björn Grandin, of Wallenius Lines, Stockholm. He is behind me on the "bridge"—a cockpit designed so that his eyes look out upon the surrounding buoys, channels, and shoreline from a level analogous to the



bridge level of the real ship. I sit in a lower cockpit, my eyes about even with this tanker's long and unencumbered steel deck. One of my hands is on the ship's wheel, the other on the engine-order telegraph. Before me is a rudder-angle indicator, a relative-wind-direction indicator, a relative-windspeed indicator, a speed log, and an r.p.m. indicator. Björn has all that duplicated in front of him, along with a port-anchor-chain indicator, a starboard-anchor-chain indicator, a bow-and-stern-thruster panel, and a compass. I have already responded to one of his commands by repeating it verbatim while turning the wheel hard over in the direction opposite to the one he spoke of. The ship does not just swing over and hit something. It takes some time to respond. Realizing my mistake, I shift the rudder at once, but the precision of Björn's maneuver is blunted. Which he never mentions. In real life he is the skipper of *Traviata*. Wallenius ships are named for operas. *Faust* and *Fidelio* fly the American flag, because they carry American military cargoes, which by law must travel in "American" ships. On *Traviata*, Björn carries cars around the world. To Yokohama he carries Japanese cars made in the United States. To the United States he carries Ford tractors made in Japan. From Sweden to the world he carries Saabs and Volvos, keys in the ashtrays. He has also delivered for Mercedes-Benz—keys in the ship's safe. ("It's the radios.") Björn lives in Malmö and drives a Ford. He is wearing a gray sweatshirt that says YANKEE BYLINE U.S. SPORTS.

We're in the *Brittany*. The model weighs sixteen tons. We go northbound in the deepwater channel, turn right on Range 97, soon pick up Range 15 by the stern, keep four red buoys on our port side, and turn thirty degrees left onto Range 162. "Every half mile you have a ninety-degree turn, so don't go too fast," Philippe has instructed. "Have power on reserve. Keep something in the pocket." Turning works better with powered kicks ahead. The telegraph speaks in parables. Dead Slow Ahead, you cannot turn easily and may drift or skid off course. Full Ahead, you make a snappy turn, but try keeping it up and disaster will present itself.

You begin your big turns well in advance or you finish up aground. This condensed roadstead of channels, shoals, and islands is intolerant of inaccuracy. As the ship begins to swing one way, it drifts the other—skids. You feel the force of the inertia—massive, inexorable, immense—moving at an angle (the "drift angle") to the axis of the ship. Sedately the vessel skids, like a cornering car. This is the Indianapolis 500 in geologic time. "You skid onto the range," Philippe says. "If it skids too much, it's on the buoys." "Overtuning"—an odd word in this context—means turning too far in order to kick ahead on the engine and correct a skid. "You turn too far to the right, then kick ahead to the left. The engine is part of the steering equipment. You cancel the skid."

At times in these tight waters the ships in their glide seem unstoppable by anything but docks, wharves, rocks, and trees. It would flatter the students to call such moments rare. Continuous shifting of the rudder from hard left to hard right, hard right to hard left, has considerable slowing effect, but not always enough. The ship might as well be sliding on ice. The Sperry Hydrobrake is essentially a pair of rudders that stick out like wings in opposite directions; these ships are not equipped with Sperry Hydrobrakes. Devices like parachutes have been proposed, and bulbous bows that open like flowers; but neither exist, here or on the oceans. The situation calls for the crash stop maneuver—emergency full astern. First the shaft has to stop spinning, and with it the propeller, and then it has to pick up revolutions in the opposite direction until it has reached full astern. By now, if several million barrels of oil are not already calming the seas around you, the propeller may cavitate. Every ship has its window of cavitation. As it slows down, with its propeller reversed, and reaches a zone of, say, twelve to eight knots, a dramatic change in pressure occurs around the screw. The water is suddenly flashing, making bubbles; the propeller is churning a high percentage of air. Philippe says, "When you have cavitation, the propeller is not working. The propeller is just making mayonnaise, you know. The crash stop maneuver is not a helpful piece of knowledge. When they use it, they just go and crash somewhere."

A very good way to stop, if there's water enough around you, is to do a Williamson turn. A ship that will stop in thirteen ship lengths after going full astern at a speed of sixteen knots will stop in ten ship lengths at full astern with the rudder cycling, and in three ship lengths with a Williamson turn. Generally known as a device for picking up a person overboard, the Williamson turn is impressively precise. You turn the wheel hard right or hard left until the ship is sixty degrees off the course it was on. Then you shift the wheel to the other extreme. The ship circles and returns to the place where it left the original track. On the training ship of Maine Maritime Academy the cadets do Williamson turns all day long around a floating life jacket, and at the end of the day they pick it up.

The Williamson turn was invented by Butakov, Philippe

Source: Naval Shiphandling, R. S. Crenshaw, U.S. Naval Institute, as it appears in the Port Revel course manual

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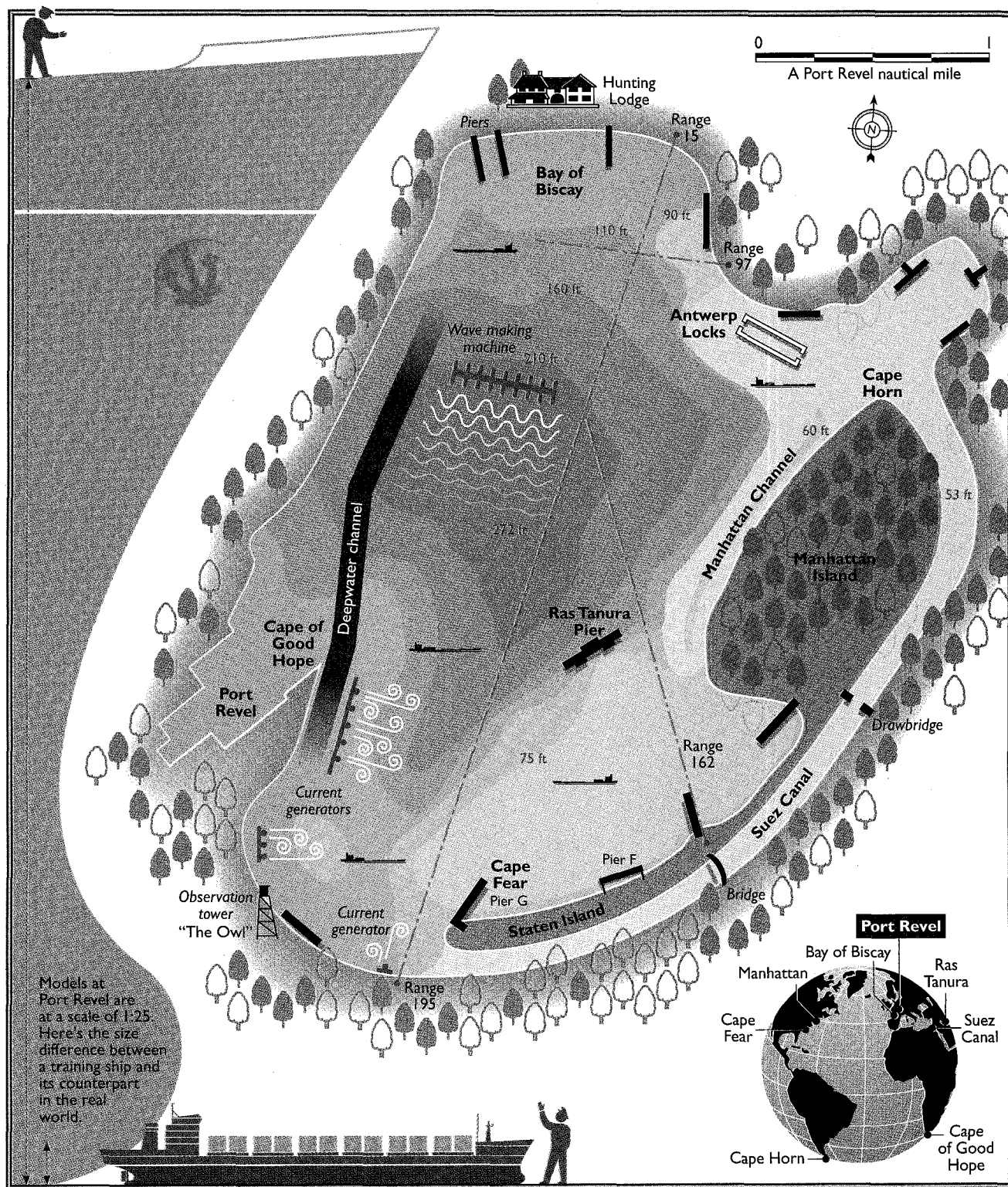
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informs us. Williamson did it during the Second World War as a lifesaving device. Butakov did it in 1903, on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War. "The maneuver was known as the Butakov pipe. It was not to recover a man fallen overboard, because at that time, you know . . ." The Russians fired guns and then did the turn they called the Butakov pipe in order to keep the guns at the same distance from the enemy.

Philippe is on the dock like a swimming instructor—in white shorts and a striped shirt across a wide space that has

processed a lion's share of exceptional food. He calls it his bulbous bow. It is supported by athletic legs. In his long career he has been a pilot in Algiers, the Persian Gulf, the Wouri River of Cameroon. On the dock he has placed a small block of wood marked BRIDGE, meaning that Björn should finish exactly there, but Björn says "Hard to Port" when he means "Hard to Starboard," and his careful approach splays. "In such a ship you never use the wharf as a brake," Philippe says. "Your stern is falling down the wind."

With a hook on the end of a pole he pulls a mooring line off the ship and secures it to a bollard, where it acts as a lever to assist the docking. The mooring lines are just nylon rope, but—because they, like everything else, are meant to function to scale—they each include a breakable section of fishing line of a pound-test appropriate to the tonnage of the ship. Everything about these models has been worked out according to a principle of similitude developed in the nineteenth century by the English hydraulic engineers William Froude and Osborne Reynolds. According to the math, the length scale (1:25) is squared to find the area scale (1:625) and cubed to find the scales of volume, weight, and force (1:15,625). Time is the square root of the length factor—1:5. Time is five times quicker than in real life. What takes one hour on a real ship takes twelve minutes here, with commands falling like rain. “Port Twenty. Slow Ahead. Midships. Full Astern.” Forty hours on the pond equals 200 hours of real ship handling. Astonishingly, the model ship *Europe* develops less than half of one horsepower in order to replicate the real ship’s 32,000. No tugs. A tug at scale would be too small. The models’ bow and stern thrusters—pumping water in either direction—can be used to simulate tugs. “We are here to make ship handling, not tug handling,” Philippe has said dourly, condemning the thrusters.

MALLARDS by the dozen cruise among the ships. At scale the mallards are thirty feet long. All the life rings mounted on trees around the pond are fifty feet across, and the trees—spruce, fir, oak, beech, chestnut—are 1,500 feet tall. The old hunting lodge set back from the water approaches the size of Versailles. The instructors have a collection of little toy sailors not quite three inches high. They place them for perspective on the long plain decks of the tankers. The toy sailors are almost unnoticeable, and at scale they are six feet tall. Real sailors use motorbikes on the decks of such tankers. Despite a sign by the pond—PÊCHE ET BAIGNADE INTERDITES—a pike was caught here that weighed eleven pounds. At scale (1:15,625) the fish weighed eighty-six tons. With respect to center of gravity and gross tonnage, the weight of a two-man crew is obviously important. Skipper and helmsman combined weigh 2,500 tons.

The models, nine in number, are worth about \$2 million. Their hulls—variously fabricated in foam, steel, and glass-reinforced plastic—are made in boatyards elsewhere but are fitted out at Port Revel. They are powered with electricity and laden with electronics. When a light glows at the top of their

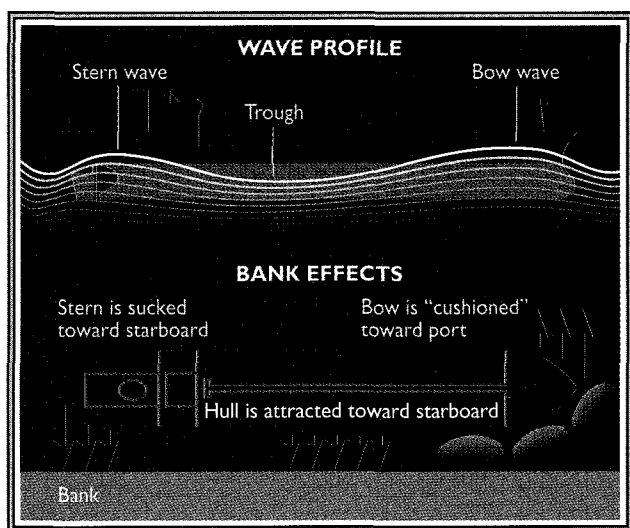
masts, they have the undivided attention of a tracking infrared theodolite, which sits at the top of a twenty-meter tower with its head cocked. Captain Chase and I call it the Owl.

Andy Chase was a card-carrying second mate some years ago, when I followed him into union halls looking for a ship. We went to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile on the SS *Stella Lykes*, with a captain so gifted that he frequently and lengthily spoke with the ship. In Buenaventura, parallel docking between two other ships without the assistance of tugs or a pilot, he worked the 700-foot *Stella Lykes* into a 750-foot space as if he were inserting a coin in a meter. Andy later became a first mate and, in 1994, a licensed master of ships of any gross tons upon oceans. It is in part a reflection of the rapid disappearance of American-flag ships that Andy is less often a master now than he is a schoolmaster. As a professor at Maine Maritime Academy, he teaches courses in celestial navigation, meteorology, seamanship, nautical science, watchkeeping, rules of the road, and ship handling, his reason for being here. Skippers do not come here at a given point in a career. Their companies seem to send them randomly. In the real world masters seldom handle ships. Har-

bor pilots and docking pilots and river pilots and bar pilots and canal pilots do. When a severe situation arises in which a captain must handle his ship, he might wish he had been to Port Revel. Meanwhile, the pilots who enroll here are testing the limits of the considerable ship handling they know, searching what is possible. The author of *Auxiliary Sail Vessel Operations* (Cornell Maritime Press), Andy Chase is forty now, his beard still blond, tattoo still blue, his temples turning gray. He does a complete circle at full ahead in deep water with the Owl watching. The Owl confides in a computer, and so does a ship-to-shore radio that transmits every engine change, every turn of the wheel, the heading, the degrees of rudder, the turn rate, the wind knots, and the ship’s velocity backward, forward, and sideways. Andy is in command of the *Europe*, with me as crew, and his deepwater turning circle is three

and a half times the length of the ship. When shipyards test ships in deep water, they go to a place where the depth is greater than six times the draft of the ship—a definition of “deep water.” At six plus, the bottom has no effect on the hull. Andy now turns a complete circle in shallow water, where the distance between the hull and the bottom is less than half of the draft. The ship is sluggish, difficult to steer. Water can’t pass underneath. The ship can’t skid. The turning circle is twice as large.

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THEY FEEL LIKE
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REPLICAS
OF REAL AND
SPECIFIC SHIPS,
TO SCALE, WITH
BULBOUS BOWS
AND WORKING
ANCHORS.**



A ship in shallow water loses maneuverability and can be difficult to control. Backing in shallow water becomes quixotic. On its own the backing ship will turn left or right or not at all. A ship is heavier in shallow water and particularly difficult to stop. The virtual mass of the ship increases, because you have to stop not only the ship but also the shallow water you take with you. Captains lose time who go into shallow water in order to cut corners and save time.

As a ship moves in deep water, it creates a wave at the bow, a wave at the stern, and a trough between. This is the wave profile, or the wave form, of a ship. The ship descends in the trough—a phenomenon known as squat, which increases as the square of the ship's speed. A 200,000-deadweight-ton tanker goes down more than seven feet at sea speed. In shallow water squat increases. Go too fast and you may go too low. To reduce sinkage, reduce your speed. When the *QE2* went aground in the Elizabeth Islands of Massachusetts, she may have been deep in her own trough, going too fast.

A British captain who came to Port Revel some years ago and went too fast in shallow water continued to give crisp, authoritative maneuvering orders—"Port Ten," "Midships," "Port Ten," "Midships," "Starboard Twenty," and so forth—although his ship was stuck firm. You can navigate in the cream of mud, as the uppermost bottom is sometimes called, but you can't maneuver in potter's clay.

Europeans say "port" and "starboard." By law Americans must say "left" and "right."

If we could rise from the pond and above the screening trees, we could see alps. On certain days we would even see Mont Blanc, about a hundred miles northeast. Through the clearest air Mont Blanc is visible from the Peugeot van that daily brings the skippers from the Hôtel Bonnoit, in the small village of Viriville, to this isolated pond on the Plateau de Chambaran. Better that we not see the great mountain, we are told, for if we do see it, rain will come within two days. In the Bonnoit's felicitous dining room, over duck pâtés, frogs' legs, *écrevisses* on lettuce like trout just caught and lying in green

grass, *pommes de terre dauphinoises*, mussel soup, Guinea fowl, *girolles avec sauce à la crème*, *quenelles de brochet*, poached-egg salad, or *lapin braisée*, the skippers exchange superstitions of their own.

Lapin braisée. The word "*lapin*" is not to be uttered on a French ship, remarks Yvon Satre, of Compagnie Générale Maritime, who is captain of the *Pascal*, which, like the full-size *Normandie*, shuffles containers between southern Europe and the Far East. Rabbits were carried as food on old French wooden ships, and—sometimes with disastrous results—they chewed not only the rigging but also the ships' wooden structures. You do not say *lapin* for fear of very bad luck, Yvon tells us. You might mention a small, flexible-bodied lagomorph with very long ears, but you never say "*lapin*." Yvon once carried twenty tons of coney from Japan to Barcelona. He might have been at greater risk, he says, if the rabbits had not come aboard at a uniform temperature of -20° .

Scott Parker, of Interlake Steamship, in Cleveland, says that a profound superstition in Great Lakes shipping is that you never leave a repair yard on a Friday. After Scott recently left a repair yard on a Friday, a boiler blew up. Philippe, over lunch at Port Revel, remarks that roughly five times a year a bulk freighter leaves a port somewhere in the world and is never heard from again. This evolves into an exchange of French and American expressions for dying. With uninventive phrases like "kicked the bucket," "bought the farm," and so forth, the Americans quickly run up something of a trade deficit, for the French—over the Camembert—mention the gentle announcement "He has stopped eating," and add to that what appears to be the ultimate word on this topic: "He has swallowed his birth certificate."

Back on the pond the reversible current generators, which can stir the whole of Port Revel in varied swirls and convolutions, are sending a two-knot flow along Pier G at Cape Fear and across the entrance to the Antwerp locks, simulating, as well, the entrance to the Oakland Terminal, in San Francisco Bay. Cape Fear in the real world is the place in North Carolina where Bermuda came out from under the North American continent, but here it is only the south end of Staten Island. The skippers are to dock, port side to, against the current. "Docking is difficult if current is coming toward you parallel to the dock," says the instructor Joseph Le Sciellour. "Remember, if you double the current speed, you square the force on the ship. The current is setting you off the pier." Yvon will attempt to dock the container ship *Normandie*.

Yvon Satre, in comparison with the other skippers, is stately. It is a special pleasure to be his third mate and helmsman. There is less to do. Where others might give thirty or forty commands (playing checkers with the engine, fine-tuning the prow), Yvon may give six. "Starboard Ten," he says. An eternity goes by, and then he says, "Midship the Wheel." His voice is solemn and musical. "Wheel" as he pronounces it is an attenuated linkage of "*oui*" and "eel." Whereas the other

Source: *The Theory and Practice of Seamanship*, by G. I. London, St. Martin's Press, as it appears in the Port Revel course manual

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skippers turned up for the course in sneakers, blue jeans, and polo shirts, Yvon appeared at dockside on the first day in buckled shoes, slacks, a striped shirt, and a blazer. Not tall but solidly constructed and with a neatly trimmed black beard, he seemed like an opera singer preparing to ship out on a swan. He is Armorican, a Breton from birth, son of a jeweler, graduate of the Ecole Nationale de la Marine Marchande. On one of his three annual trips to the Far East he can take his wife but no children. Since he has no children, that's not much of an inconvenience. (Björn Grandin has a boy and a girl, and his family can travel on the *Traviata* whenever he likes.) Yvon is fifty-three. His metal-rimmed spectacles dangle from a cord around his neck. His manner is not only quietly and commandingly assured but scholarly and philosophical as well. When someone remarked on this, Philippe Delesalle muttered, "*Ce n'est pas Sartre.*"

Now in the *Normandie*, Yvon negotiates the Manhattan channel on his way to the dock on Staten Island. Like everyone else in the class, he is not immune to disaster. The captains are here to learn difficult maneuvers. On his first trip past the current generator, Yvon hit it six times. He was sucked into it. As his helmsman, I was in a position to hear him softly comment, "*C'est difficile!*" The *Normandie*, its bulbous bow glowing red in the ceramic-green water, approaches a critical bend in the Manhattan channel, where the current is not so much a problem as a trap. "Hard to Starboard. Full Astern. Midship the Wheel." He goes aground so hard that the draft of

the ship decreases by ten scale feet. He smiles and says, even more softly, "We have spoken about the rabbit yesterday."

A \$400,000 wave maker is emitting, to scale, a ten-foot wave every eight seconds. Parallel to the crests, the ships roll, dead in the water. Going half astern and achieving sternway, they are drawn—without any additional commands or maneuvers—toward the waves and away from shore, automatically turning ninety degrees as they back up, and moving in the direction of safety. It's a good way to stay off the rocks.

While waves and currents matter plenty, nothing affects these big heavy ships so much as wind. When engineers at SOGREAH (the Société Grenobloise d'Etudes et d'Applications Hydrauliques) were first designing this evident combination of a miniature golf course and Caltech, their most sensitive consideration was wind. In any marine setting—any Atlantic or Mediterranean port—there was much too much of it, because wind, like all else, had to be figured to scale. The math said that a ten-knot wind against the models would equal a fifty-knot wind on the actual sea. There was too much wind in the three deep valleys of Grenoble. So the company went to the foothills and found what Philippe Delesalle describes as "a small lake in the middle of nowhere sheltered by forest." When a breeze ruffles the surface, our wind-speed indicators will read thirty or forty knots, and although the model ships may weigh twenty actual tons, they can be blown off course.

THE MAN INTO WHOSE YARD YOU SHOULD NOT HIT YOUR BALL

each day mowed
and mowed his lawn, his dry quarter acre,
the machine slicing a wisp
from each blade's tip. Dust storms rose
around the roar: 6:00 P.M., every day,
spring, summer, fall. If he could mow
the snow he would.
On one side, his neighbors the cows
turned their backs to him
and did what they do to the grass.
Where he worked, I don't know
but it sets his jaw to: tight.
His wife a cipher, shoebox tissue,
a shattered apron. As if
into her head he drove a wedge of shale.
Years later his daughter goes to jail.

Mow, mow, mow his lawn
gently down a decade's summers.
On his other side lived mine and me,
across a narrow pasture, often fallow;
a field of fly balls, the best part of childhood
and baseball, but one could not cross his line
and if it did,
as one did in 1956
and another in 1958,
it came back coleslaw—his lawn mower
ate it up, happy
to cut something, no matter
what the manual said
about foreign objects,
stones, or sticks.

—THOMAS LUX

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WE FOUND A WAY TO GET
WATER TO WATERMELONS.



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Where water is as precious to farmers as oil is to us. And now, green acres of farmland are feeding people coast to coast, everything from apples to oranges, to yes, you guessed it, watermelons.

It's one more way our relentless pursuit of energy keeps the world running. Looks like that water made quite a splash.



A WORLD OF ENERGY.

A weathervane, turning into a shifting wind, revolves about its pivot point, which—needless to say—stays where it is and does not change. In the behavior and handling of ships nothing is more significant than the captains' and pilots' sense of the point on a ship that is analogous to the place where a weathervane swings, with the difference that on a ship—in varying situations having to do with, among other things, center of gravity, speed, torque, and direction—the swinging place moves. It is known in ship handling as the peripatetic pivot point. On a ship moving forward the pivot point is about a third of the way back from the bow, and the ship turns around that point. If the ship stops and moves backward, the pivot point travels aft and settles even closer to the stern than it was to the bow. If two tugs push the ship on the same side at opposite ends, the tug that is farthest from the pivot point will turn the ship. A bow thruster will have scant effect on a ship that is moving forward, but will easily turn a ship that is moving aft. If you can sense the peripatetic pivot point—in your mind following it around the ship as if it were a spotlight—you can back around a corner and into a pier using engine and rudder alone. “With the real ship you can do that, of course,” says Joe Le Sciellour, showing limitless confidence in his students. They attempt the maneuver with the models. This academic drill illustrates the role of the pivot point in ship handling, and the skippers learn by failing at it, one by one. To back into the pier, put the pivot point off the corner of the dock and “saw wood,” they are told. “*Scier du bois.*” You kick with the engine, short pulses—Full Astern, Full Ahead, Full Astern, Full Ahead. “It’s a matter of transferring the pivot point from stern to bow and bow to stern,” Joe says. The kicks, proportionally, are more astern. Philippe is so intent on this that he has wired himself to a bullhorn. “As long as your pivot point is ahead of the corner, you’ll turn,” he broadcasts. Joe adds, “You transfer the pivot point and finish parallel.” Joe Le Sciellour, who lives in Dunkirk, is an animated teacher—short, trim, and intense—and formerly a North Sea pilot and skipper of a Channel ferry. Like Philippe, he once worked as a pilot in Algiers, where depths were routinely given in feet and lengths in meters.

Gradually a sort of catechism of ship handling is rising in everyone’s mind. Steer with your engine. Understand the limits of what you can do with your ship. You do it more by feel than by math. You have to bear in mind the varying effects of wind, current, swell, and momentum. You have to bear in mind the ratio of your wet longitudinal area to your rudder surface. You have to bear in mind that a ship having

headway fetches to windward. The farther aft the bridge, the more she wants to come into the wind. You have to bear in mind the bank effects in narrow channels, the bottom effects in shallow water. You deal with current in a narrow channel not by speed but by setting a good drift angle. At the right angle to an oncoming current you can cross it without slipping backward. (In a canoe you would call that ferrying.) You have to bear in mind not only your speed through the water but also your speed over the ground. Know your knots of wind drift. What is your draft? You won’t know exactly. What is the depth of the water due to tide? It is hard to be accurate. Your depth finder sometimes reads into mud, registering more depth than is there. And after you have kept all this—times ten—in the front of your mind all day, Owl & Company will present you with graphic and numerical printouts showing in hours, minutes, and seconds your headings and degrees, your rudder degrees, your engine r.p.m.s, your forward and backward speeds, your transverse velocities, your turn rates, the action of your thrusters, the knots of wind you were working in, where you went, what you did, and everything you hit or missed.

If an anchor moves along the bottom when you don’t intend it to, it is dragging. If you mean it to move, it is dredging. You dredge the anchor, or anchors, to make a slow speed even slower, to increase the precision of a maneuver, to do

various things you otherwise could not do, or to stop. The skippers on the pond are now dredging. Andy, in *Gilda*, the model of a tanker of 125,000 deadweight tons, puts out a shackle and a half to swing on his starboard anchor and make what he describes as “a tight turn in a hairy place.” A shackle is a shot is ninety feet or fifteen fathoms or twenty-seven meters of anchor chain. Approaching Pier F in the rain, Andy puts out two and a half shackles on either side and dredges both anchors as if he were snowplowing skis. That is what dredging is, Philippe says. The anchor acts as a plow in the ground. Your chain length should be one and a half times to twice the depth of the water. Keep a constant strain on the chain. Forget kicks ahead: they can break your chain. The anchor prevents the ship from making too much headway. It moves the pivot point forward, and gives you better control with the rudder. The ship will turn more quickly and more sharply. After all, if a ship is swinging on an anchor chain, the pivot point is the hawse pipe. You can dock, if you have to, using only anchors.

Yvon drops two anchors to equal depth, goes hard to port at forty r.p.m.; his stern swings to starboard, and his ship goes

**STEER WITH
YOUR ENGINE.
UNDERSTAND THE
LIMITS OF WHAT
YOU CAN DO
WITH YOUR SHIP.
BEAR IN MIND
THE EFFECTS OF
WIND, CURRENT,
SWELL, AND
MOMENTUM.**

snug against a pier. Andy is spectacular. He drops his port anchor with several shackles and his starboard anchor with a short chain. This helps him swing 180 degrees and end up with the dock ten inches from his starboard side. Philippe does not entirely approve. He translates the scale. "Twenty feet," he says. "Don't try to come too close to the dock. Don't move too fast over ground; the anchor is bouncing."

Henry H. Hooyer, the author of the textbook *Behavior and Handling of Ships* (1983), called maneuvering on your own with dredging anchors "ship handling in its purest form." Hooyer, a Dutch master and pilot, was one of the first instructors at Port Revel.

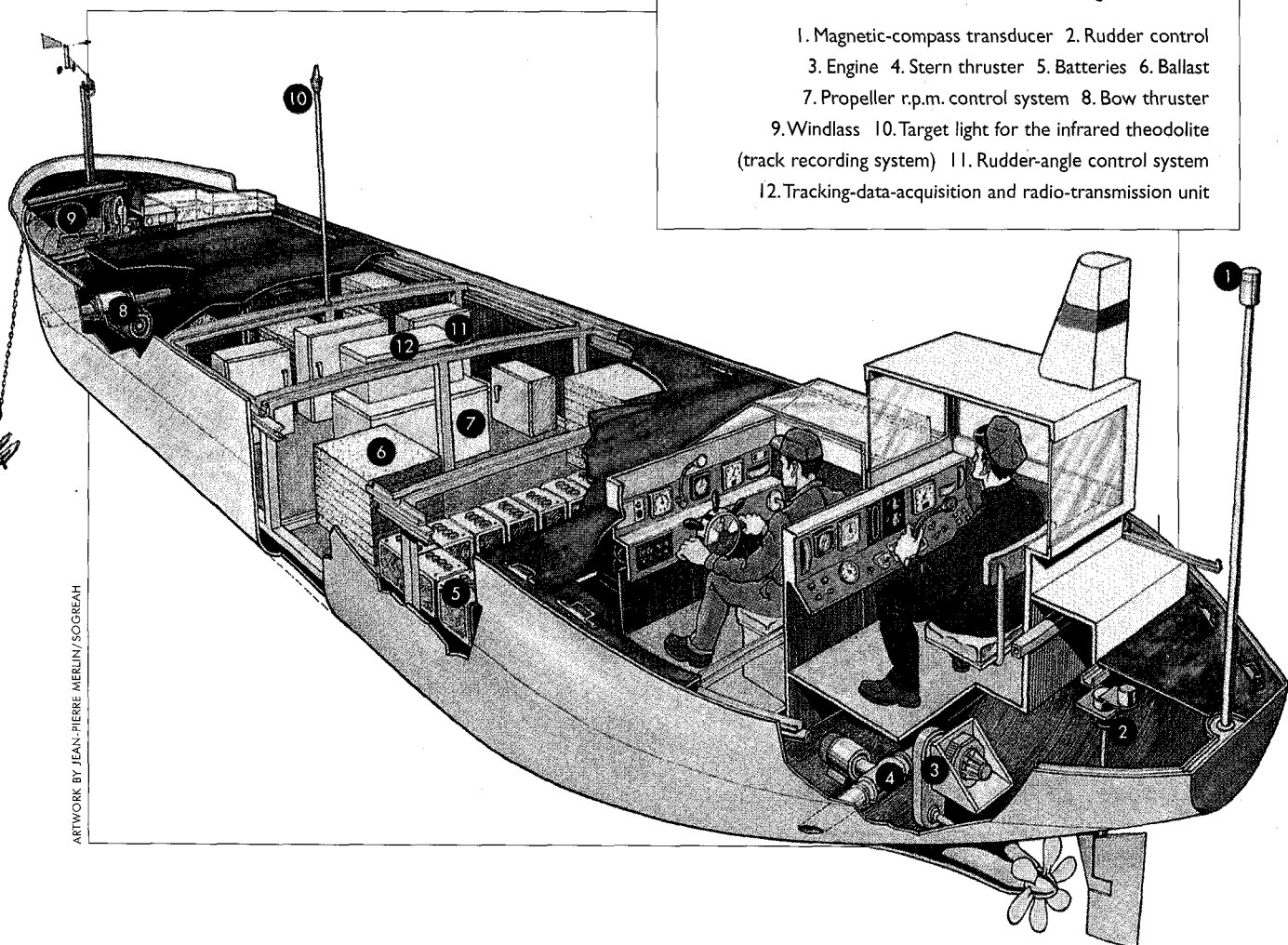
All through the Cold War, Soviet captains came to Port Revel and learned ship handling in English—several hundred of them, from USSR Morflot. About forty maritime countries have been represented here. The instructors place the Soviets only slightly ahead of Uruguayans and Koreans as skippers who, because of the language problem, have been difficult to teach. Cameroonians, Arabs, Greeks, and Indonesians have generally been more verbal and responsive. Japanese masters and harbor pilots are not involved in this comparison, because they never come here. Japanese pilots are retired Japanese skippers. First an old one takes

you from the sea buoy, and then an older one takes you into the harbor. Many are in their eighties. Philippe says, "The pilot is so old he is almost feeling his way with a white cane." Pilots worldwide routinely board ships up rope ladders. Björn Grandin mentions a Japanese request that a ship in open waters near a sea buoy put out its gangway so that a pilot could use it to come aboard. This special, and not entirely safe, consideration had to do with the fact that the pilot was more than ninety years old.

TODAY the Port Revel merchant marine is going to practice meeting and overtaking in the Suez Canal. This is a replica of the southernmost four miles of Suez, and its bottom and bank effects are quite enough for one ship, let alone two. The bow wave, humping up between the bow and the bank, creates a bow cushion that tends to push the bow away if the ship runs too close to one side. Pumping water out from under the stern, the propeller lowers the pressure there. Bernoulli's principle also lowers pressure at the stern. Bernoulli's principle—where the flow is fastest, pressure is lowest—holds airplanes in the sky. Air flows faster over the top of a wing than under the bottom, because of the wing's shape. Water flows faster between a stern and a bank than

MODEL EQUIPMENT

1. Magnetic-compass transducer
2. Rudder control
3. Engine
4. Stern thruster
5. Batteries
6. Ballast
7. Propeller r.p.m. control system
8. Bow thruster
9. Windlass
10. Target light for the infrared theodolite (track recording system)
11. Rudder-angle control system
12. Tracking-data-acquisition and radio-transmission unit



on the other side of a ship. It has to, in the restricted space. Reacting to the lowered pressure, the stern is sucked in toward the bank. You try to anticipate suction and start compensating before it comes. In a bend in a narrow channel "suction steers the ship," according to Hooyer. To fight suction, you may have to go through a left-hand bend in the canal on hard-right rudder, scuttling along like a crab. Never depend on bow cushion to keep you from hitting a bank. The momentum of 250,000 tons can put you through any cushion and into the ground. In mid-canal the bow cushion and the stern suction are equal on the two sides. But the bottom is uneven. A canal pilot stays off the center line in order to know where the effects are coming from, like a basketball player keeping one hand on an opponent.

The greater your speed, the stronger the forces. With speed the bow wave builds up and pushes the bow off the bank and the stern into it. With speed the peripatetic pivot point moves forward, increasing the leverage of the stern suction. Both rotated and sucked, the stern hits the side of the canal. To prevent this, you try to compensate with rudder, but there is—written on the rudder—no guarantee. When SOGREAH was doing a study of the Suez Canal, forty years ago, the thought occurred to the engineers that they might learn more if they built manned, self-propelled models of real ships instead of a traditional towing tank. When masters and pilots saw the first model, they smiled derisively. In the words of Jean Graff, a SOGREAH engineer who is the director of Port Revel, "The smiles lasted half a day, and then they started sweating. They were screwing up. They had their talkie-walkies. They weren't even able to berth the ship. After ten days they agreed that they could extrapolate." They said they felt bank effects; they said that being in the model was much like being on a real ship in the real Suez Canal. Pilots and masters today are accustomed to doing ship-handling exercises on electronic simulators. "With a simulator you don't feel the ship," Graff continues. "Simulators are not scale models. Transient hydraulic phenomena around the rudder and the propeller are very difficult to translate into data." On an electronic simulator you could learn baseball strategy, but you could not learn to play baseball.

Kenny Lichtle has had less trouble going through the Suez Canal backward than forward. Trying it bow-first, he was all over the canal, hitting both sides. Later, after entering the canal stern-first, he backed through it all the way without so much as nicking a buoy. "It's much easier going backward

than forward," he remarked offhandedly. "Great Lakes people do it all the time. Great Lakes people call the bridge the pilot-house. That's what it is." Like Scott Parker, Kenny works for Interlake Steamship, carrying iron ore, coal, or limestone, and backing up rivers to Great Lakes ports. He is a gentle hippie with a bald spot, and hair that falls to his shoulders. He was born in 1950, and has a graying beard and a golden sense of humor. When he saw me pissing in the Suez Canal, he drew himself up and said, "Have you no shame?" Kenny has six children and lives in Sandusky, Ohio, on Lake Erie. He was a deckhand who rose to captain—came up the hawsepipe, as the expression goes, and, unlike the other skippers here, never attended a maritime academy. He is laid-back in manner and commands. As his ship heads into channels pocked with hazards, he leans on his arms, removes a cigarette from his mouth, and says, "Give me about Ten Right." I give him about Ten Right. Like all skippers on the Great Lakes, he says "Half Back" for "Half Astern" and "Full Back" for "Full Astern" and "Dead Stick" for "Stop Engines." The ore, coal, and limestone carriers of the Great Lakes are of a size with VLCCs—the very large crude carriers of the world's oceans, whose

length is a thousand feet. The work he and Scott do is markedly dangerous. In swift-rising storms ore carriers have disappeared in thirty seconds. The Great Lakes captains mention their speed in miles per hour and call their vessels boats. The other skippers, watching Kenny and Scott here at Port Revel, and meeting them head on in the Suez Canal, are developing a fresh reverence for ship handling as it is practiced in the middle of a continent.

In the canal all manage to meet head on and pass without mishap. The combined width of two ships is more than half of the canal's channel. Two ships coming toward each other should each stay in mid-channel and go straight at each other until the right moment to veer. "You play chicken," Philippe instructs. "You play kamikaze." Many factors about the ships and the channel compose the right moment. If one ship moves over too soon—or if both ships move over too soon—there is great risk

that the build-up of bow cushion against the banks will push the bows inward and cause a collision, as deep dents throughout the world fleet attest. "You play kamikaze up to a certain point, and then it's time to go," Philippe continues. "No problem with the meeting. No problem getting past one ship. If another is behind it, you could be in trouble."

A ship has a width of influence five times its beam, a depth of influence five times its draft. Two ships anywhere near each other are going to create discernible effects. A sub-

**TODAY THE PORT
REVEL MERCHANT
MARINE IS GOING
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OVERTAKING IN A
REPLICA OF
THE SOUTHERN-
MOST FOUR
MILES OF THE
SUEZ CANAL.**

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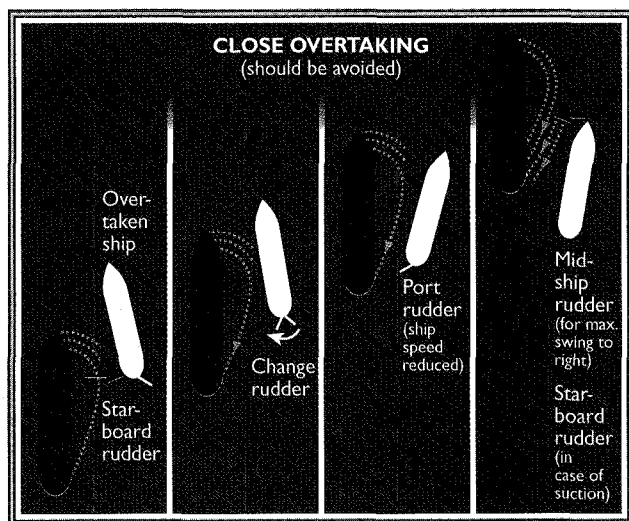
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marine passing 300 feet under a VLCC is pushed down by the pressure of the ship. Passing ships repel each other at the bow and attract each other at the stern. You use rudder and you kick ahead with the engine to defeat the suction at the stern. In one class at Port Revel two ships in the Suez Canal were heading toward each other and intending to pass port to port. They diverged too soon. Both bows bounced off the bank cushion and swung sharply to the left. The ships crossed the channel in front of each other and passed unintentionally starboard to starboard.

As our dingless skippers listen to that story, they emit faint whiffs of immunity. They are already veterans of the model canal. And now they will re-enter it and practice overtaking one another. Passing a ship that is going in the same direction in a confined channel is difficult and perilous. In the Seine some years ago a freighter of 10,000 tons passed a small coaster full of grain. The coaster capsized, and all but the pilot died. Philippe says of overtaking, "We do it here to show you. But don't do it."

The model tankers *Berlin* and *Grenoble* are small enough for the exercise. Nearly all the others are either too large for the canal (the size known in the world fleet as Post Panamax) or come so close to filling it up that you wouldn't even think of trying to pass another ship. The *Berlin* model weighs 7,188 pounds and has a load draft of one foot five and one-eighth inches. The *Grenoble* weighs 7,761 pounds and has a load draft of a foot and a half. The model canal is two feet deep. The *Berlin* is regarded here as "the pig of the fleet." She does not accept mistakes. She has a small rudder, very little stern power. A German skipper once said, "You should call her *Paris*."

In a canal channel the bow wave of an overtaking ship not only speeds up the overtaken ship by pushing it forward but also shoves the stern of the overtaken ship toward the bank, increasing bank suction on the stern. When the ships are side by side, the bow waves push them apart while mutual suction draws the sterns together. As the overtaking ship begins to

draw away, its stern suction pulls the bow of the overtaken ship toward mid-channel and—at the stern of the overtaken ship—increases the suction from the bank. In other words, I pass you, I leave you screwed crosswise.

With two long blasts on his whistle and two short, Björn, in *Berlin*, asks to pass Andy in the canal. Long-short-long-short—Andy, in *Grenoble*, agrees to be overtaken. "Go slow, or dead slow," Philippe calls to Andy from the bank. "The greater the difference in speed, the smaller the problem." This problem is not small enough. Björn hits Andy. Andy "retaliates" as his bow is sucked into a second collision. Andy ricochets and goes aground.

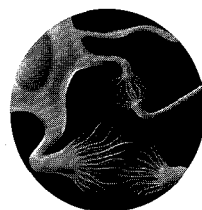
Yvon is promoted to skipper of *Grenoble*. The two ships enter the canal again. Yvon blasts for permission to pass. In a few commanding words he anticipates and overcomes bow cushions and stern suction, bank and bottom effects: "Port Twenty. Hard to Port. Half Ahead. Midship the Wheel." Between the two ships is always daylight. Yvon says, almost somberly, "Nice, huh?" No little lagomorphs with long ears today.

Kenny, in the *Berlin*, with me as engineer, thinks he's going on the rocks. At least that is what he says. "Give me Dead Stick, Full Back, we're going on the rocks." Instead the bank effects steer the ship, and he collides with Scott. The two ships, veering out of the channel, plow the canal and block it. Kenny flicks a butt into the water, and Scott takes command of *Berlin*. Scott, who lives in Ocala, Florida, and commutes to the Great Lakes, was trained at Great Lakes Maritime Academy, in Traverse City. Tall, with a dark and gyroscopic moustache, he is at least as keen as Kenny is informal. The two ships go around and re-enter the canal. Scott overtakes Kenny in the *Grenoble*. His commands are as crisp as Kenny's were casual. He counters the bow cushions. We draw even. We pull forward. Our stern sucks Kenny in. His bow hits our stern and sticks there as if it were welded. Downchannel the two ships lurch as one. Philippe cries out on his bullhorn: "*Berlin* is towing *Grenoble*! Like two dogs, you are stuck!" The entire enterprise is on the rocks.

"If you learn one thing here that helps you prevent an accident in the next ten years, we have succeeded," Joe Le Sciellour remarks. People who study at Port Revel ever after think twice about overtaking a ship in a narrow channel. For that matter, ramming piers, hitting the wave generator, or getting buoy chains tangled in their propellers tends to humble them too. These are captains who dream of ships. On the way to Port Revel in the van this morning, they told stories about dreaming of ships. Andy said he has had a recurrent dream for some years in which he tries to climb a mountain in a ship. He has the anchor out before him as piton. They dream of taking ships through the streets of cities, going hard to starboard at Thirty-fourth and Fifth. Kenny dreams of parking his ship in a mud puddle at a Kmart. And the van deposits them at Port Revel, which is beyond their wildest dreams. ☞

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The NEXT Industrial Revolution

by WILLIAM McDONOUGH and
MICHAEL BRAUNGART

"Eco-efficiency," the current industrial buzzword, will neither save the environment nor foster ingenuity and productivity, the authors say. They propose a new approach that aims to solve rather than alleviate the problems that industry makes

In the spring of 1912 one of the largest moving objects ever created by human beings left Southampton and began gliding toward New York. It was the epitome of its industrial age—a potent representation of technology, prosperity, luxury, and progress. It weighed 66,000 tons. Its steel hull stretched the length of four city blocks. Each of its steam engines was the size of a townhouse. And it was headed for a disastrous encounter with the natural world.

This vessel, of course, was the *Titanic*—a brute of a ship, seemingly impervious to the details of nature. In the minds of the captain, the crew, and many of the passengers, nothing could sink it.

One might say that the infrastructure created by the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century resembles such a steamship. It is powered by fossil fuels, nuclear reactors, and chemicals. It is pouring waste into the water and smoke into the sky. It is attempting to work by its own rules, contrary to those of the natural world. And although it may seem invincible, its fundamental design flaws presage disaster. Yet many people still believe that with a few minor alterations, this infrastructure can take us safely and prosperously into the future.

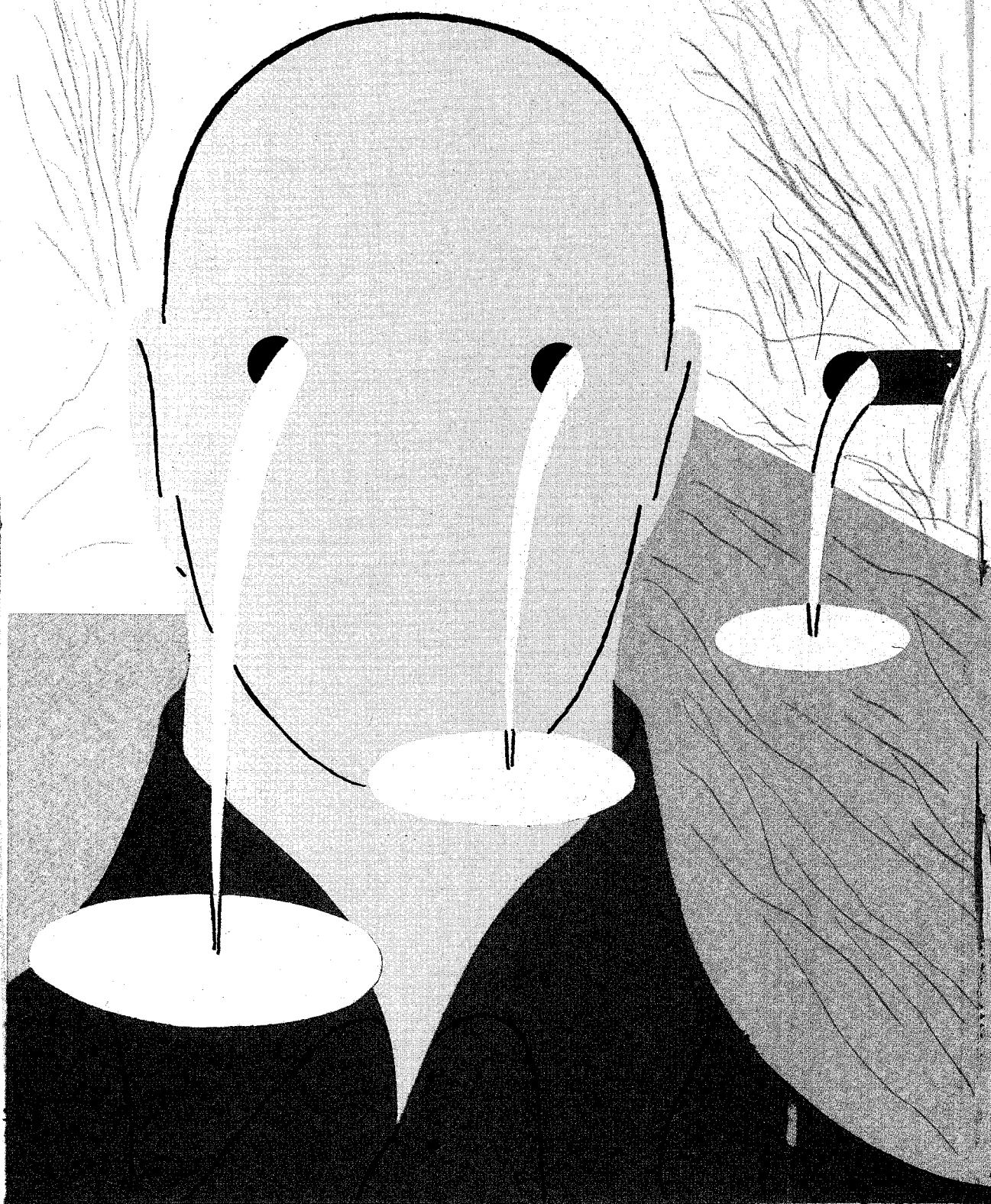
During the Industrial Revolution resources seemed inexhaustible and nature was viewed as something to be tamed and civilized. Recently, however, some leading industrialists have begun to realize that traditional ways of doing things may not be sustainable over the long term. "What we thought

was boundless has limits," Robert Shapiro, the chairman and chief executive officer of Monsanto, said in a 1997 interview, "and we're beginning to hit them."

The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, led by the Canadian businessman Maurice Strong, recognized those limits. Approximately 30,000 people from around the world, including more than a hundred world leaders and representatives of 167 countries, gathered in Rio de Janeiro to respond to troubling symptoms of environmental decline. Although there was sharp disappointment afterward that no binding agreement had been reached at the summit, many industrial participants touted a particular strategy: eco-efficiency. The machines of industry would be refitted with cleaner, faster, quieter engines. Prosperity would remain unobstructed, and economic and organizational structures would remain intact. The hope was that eco-efficiency would transform human industry from a system that takes, makes, and wastes into one that integrates economic, environmental, and ethical concerns. Eco-efficiency is now considered by industries across the globe to be the strategy of choice for change.

What is eco-efficiency? Primarily, the term means "doing more with less"—a precept that has its roots in early industrialization. Henry Ford was adamant about lean and clean operating policies; he saved his company money by recycling and reusing materials, reduced the use of natural resources, minimized packaging, and set new standards with his timesaving assembly line. Ford wrote in 1926, "You must

cro
nin





get the most out of the power, out of the material, and out of the time”—a credo that could hang today on the wall of any eco-efficient factory. The linkage of efficiency with sustaining the environment was perhaps most famously articulated in *Our Common Future*, a report published in 1987 by the United Nations’ World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future* warned that if pollution control were not intensified, property and ecosystems would be threatened, and existence would become unpleasant and even harmful to human health in some cities. “Industries and industrial operations should be encouraged that are more efficient in terms of resource use, that generate less pollution and waste, that are based on the use of renewable rather than non-renewable resources, and that minimize irreversible adverse impacts on human health and the environment,” the commission stated in its agenda for change.

The term “eco-efficiency” was promoted five years later, by the Business Council (now the World Business Council) for Sustainable Development, a group of forty-eight industrial sponsors including Dow, Du Pont, Con Agra, and Chevron, who brought a business perspective to the Earth Summit. The council presented its call for change in practical terms, focusing on what businesses had to gain from a new ecological awareness rather than on what the environment had to lose if industry continued in current patterns. In *Changing Course*, a report released just before the summit, the group’s founder, Stephan Schmidheiny, stressed the importance of eco-efficiency for all companies that aimed to be competitive, sustainable, and successful over the long term. In 1996 Schmidheiny said, “I predict that within a decade it is going to be next to impossible for a business to be competitive without also being ‘eco-efficient’—adding more value to a good or service

while using fewer resources and releasing less pollution.”

As Schmidheiny predicted, eco-efficiency has been working its way into industry with extraordinary success. The corporations committing themselves to it continue to increase in number, and include such big names as Monsanto, 3M, and Johnson & Johnson. Its famous three *Rs*—reduce, reuse, recycle—are steadily gaining popularity in the home as well as the workplace. The trend stems in part from eco-efficiency’s economic benefits, which can be considerable: 3M, for example, has saved more than \$750 million through pollution-prevention projects, and other companies, too, claim to be realizing big savings. Naturally, reducing resource consumption, energy use, emissions, and wastes has implications for the environment as well. When one hears that Du Pont has cut its emissions of airborne cancer-causing chemicals by almost 75 percent since 1987, one can’t help feeling more secure. This is another benefit of eco-efficiency: it diminishes guilt and fear. By subscribing to eco-efficiency, people and industries can be less “bad” and less fearful about the future. Or can they?

Eco-efficiency is an outwardly admirable and certainly well-intended concept, but, unfortunately, it is not a strategy for success over the long term, because it does not reach deep enough. It works within the same system that caused the problem in the first place, slowing it down with moral proscriptions and punitive demands. It presents little more than an illusion of change. Relying on eco-efficiency to save the environment will in fact achieve the opposite—it will let industry finish off everything quietly, persistently, and completely.

We are forwarding a reshaping of human industry—what we and the author Paul Hawken call the Next Industrial Revolution. Leaders of this movement include many people in diverse fields, among them commerce, politics, the humanities, science, engineering, and education. Especially notable are the businessman Ray Anderson; the philanthropist Teresa Heinz; the Chattanooga city councilman Dave Crockett; the physicist Amory Lovins; the environmental-studies professor David W. Orr; the environmentalists Sarah Severn, Dianne Dillon Ridgley, and Susan Lyons; the environmental product developer Heidi Holt; the ecological designer John Todd; and the writer Nancy Jack Todd. We are focused here on a new way of designing industrial production. As an architect and industrial designer and a chemist who have worked with both commercial and ecological systems, we see conflict between industry and the environment as a design problem—a very big design problem.

ECO-EFFICIENCY—DOING MORE WITH LESS—IS AN OUTWARDLY ADMIRABLE CONCEPT. BUT IT WORKS WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM THAT ORIGINALLY CAUSED THE PROBLEM. IT PRESENTS LITTLE MORE THAN AN ILLUSION OF CHANGE.

A Retroactive Design Assignment

MANY of the basic intentions behind the Industrial Revolution were good ones, which most of us would probably like to see carried out today: to bring more goods and services to larger numbers of people, to raise standards of living, and to give people more choice and opportunity, among others. But there were crucial omissions. Perpetuating the diversity and vitality of forests, rivers, oceans, air, soil, and animals was not part of the agenda.

If someone were to present the Industrial Revolution as a retroactive design assignment, it might sound like this:

Design a system of production that

- * puts billions of pounds of toxic material into the air, water, and soil every year
- * measures prosperity by activity, not legacy
- * requires thousands of complex regulations to keep people and natural systems from being poisoned too quickly
- * produces materials so dangerous that they will require constant vigilance from future generations
- * results in gigantic amounts of waste
- * puts valuable materials in holes all over the planet, where they can never be retrieved
- * erodes the diversity of biological species and cultural practices

Eco-efficiency instead

- * releases *fewer* pounds of toxic material into the air, water, and soil every year
- * measures prosperity by *less* activity
- * *meets or exceeds* the stipulations of thousands of complex regulations that aim to keep people and natural systems from being poisoned too quickly
- * produces *fewer* dangerous materials that will require constant vigilance from future generations
- * results in *smaller* amounts of waste
- * puts *fewer* valuable materials in holes all over the planet, where they can never be retrieved
- * standardizes and homogenizes biological species and cultural practices

RECENTLY WE HELPED TO CONCEIVE AND CREATE A COMPOSTABLE UPHOLSTERY FABRIC SO SAFE THAT ONE COULD LITERALLY EAT IT. SIXTY CHEMICAL COMPANIES WERE APPROACHED ABOUT JOINING THE PROJECT; ALL DECLINED.

Plainly put, eco-efficiency aspires to make the old, destructive system less so. But its goals, however admirable, are fatally limited.

Reduction, reuse, and recycling slow down the rates of contamination and depletion but do not stop these processes. Much recycling, for instance, is what we call “downcycling,” because it reduces the quality of a material over time. When plastic other than that found in such products as soda and water bottles is recycled, it is often mixed with different plastics to produce a hybrid of lower quality, which is then molded into something amorphous and cheap, such as park benches or speed bumps. The original high-quality material is not retrieved, and it eventually ends up in landfills or incinerators.

The well-intended, creative use of recycled materials for new products can be misguided. For example, people may feel that they are making an ecologically sound choice by buying and wearing clothing made of fibers from recycled plastic bottles. But the fibers from plastic bottles were not specifically designed to be next to human skin. Blindly adopting superficial “environmental” approaches without fully understanding their effects can be no better than doing nothing.

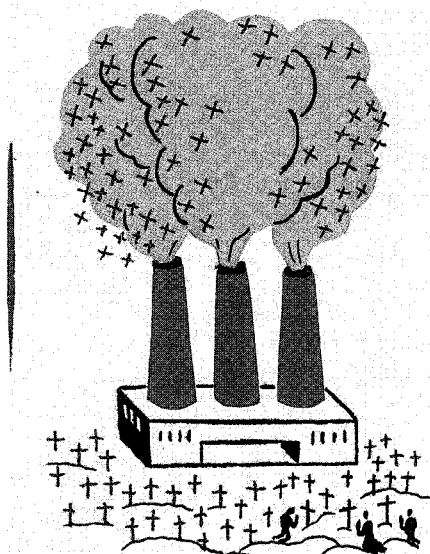
Recycling is more expensive for communities than it needs to be, partly because traditional recycling tries to force materials into more lifetimes than they were designed for—a complicated and messy conversion, and one that itself expends energy and resources. Very few objects of modern consumption were designed with recycling in mind. If the process is truly to save money and materials, products must be designed from the very beginning to be recycled or even “upcycled”—a term we use to describe the return to industrial systems of materials with improved, rather than degraded, quality.

The reduction of potentially harmful emissions and wastes is another goal of eco-efficiency. But current studies are beginning to raise concern that even tiny amounts of dangerous emissions can have disastrous effects on biological systems over time. This is a particular concern in the case of endocrine disruptors—industrial chemicals in a variety of modern plastics and consumer goods which appear to mimic hormones

and connect with receptors in human beings and other organisms. Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peterson Myers, the authors of *Our Stolen Future* (1996), a groundbreaking study on certain synthetic chemicals and the environment, assert that “astoundingly small quantities of these hormonally active compounds can wreak all manner of biological havoc, particularly in those exposed in the womb.”

On another front, new research on particulates—microscopic particles released during incineration and combustion processes, such as those in power plants and automobiles—shows that they can lodge in and damage the lungs, especially in children and the elderly. A 1995 Harvard study found that as many as 100,000 people die annually as a result of these tiny particles. Although regulations for smaller particles are in

place, implementation does not have to begin until 2005. Real change would be not regulating the release of particles but attempting to eliminate dangerous emissions altogether—by design.



Applying Nature's Cycles to Industry

PRODUCE more with less,” “Minimize waste,” “Reduce,” and similar dictates advance the notion of a world of limits—one whose carrying capacity is strained by burgeoning populations and exploding production and consumption. Eco-efficiency tells us to restrict industry and curtail growth—to

try to limit the creativity and productiveness of humankind. But the idea that the natural world is inevitably destroyed by human industry, or that excessive demand for goods and services causes environmental ills, is a simplification. Nature—highly industrious, astonishingly productive and creative, even “wasteful”—is not efficient but *effective*.

Consider the cherry tree. It makes thousands of blossoms just so that another tree might germinate, take root, and grow. Who would notice piles of cherry blossoms littering the ground in the spring and think, “How inefficient and wasteful”? The tree’s abundance is useful and safe. After falling to the ground, the blossoms return to the soil and become nutrients for the surrounding environment. Every last particle

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contributes in some way to the health of a thriving ecosystem. "Waste equals food"—the first principle of the Next Industrial Revolution.

The cherry tree is just one example of nature's industry, which operates according to cycles of nutrients and metabolisms. This cyclical system is powered by the sun and constantly adapts to local circumstances. Waste that stays waste does not exist.

Human industry, on the other hand, is severely limited. It follows a one-way, linear, cradle-to-grave manufacturing line in which things are created and eventually discarded, usually in an incinerator or a landfill. Unlike the waste from nature's work, the waste from human industry is not "food" at all. In fact, it is often poison. Thus the two conflicting systems: a pile of cherry blossoms and a heap of toxic junk in a landfill.

But there is an alternative—one that will allow both business and nature to be fecund and productive. This alternative is what we call "eco-effectiveness." Our concept of eco-effectiveness leads to human industry that is regenerative rather than depletive. It involves the design of things that celebrate interdependence with other living systems. From an industrial-design perspective, it means products that work within cradle-to-cradle life cycles rather than cradle-to-grave ones.

Waste Equals Food

ANCIENT nomadic cultures tended to leave organic wastes behind, restoring nutrients to the soil and the surrounding environment. Modern, settled societies simply want to get rid of waste as quickly as possible. The potential nutrients in organic waste are lost when they are disposed of in landfills, where they cannot be used to rebuild soil; depositing synthetic materials and chemicals in natural systems strains the environment. The ability of complex, interdependent natural ecosystems to absorb such foreign material is limited if not nonexistent. Nature cannot do anything with the stuff *by design*: many manufactured products are intended not to break down under natural conditions.

If people are to prosper within the natural world, all the products and materials manufactured by industry must after each useful life provide nourishment for something new. Since many of the things people make are not natural, they are not safe "food" for biological systems. Products composed of materials that do not biodegrade should be designed as technical nutrients that continually circulate within closed-loop industrial cycles—the technical metabolism.

In order for these two metabolisms to remain healthy, great care must be taken to avoid cross-contamination. Things that go into the biological metabolism should not contain mutagens, carcinogens, heavy metals, endocrine disrupters, persistent toxic substances, or bio-accumulative substances. Things that go into the technical metabolism should be kept well apart from the biological metabolism.

If the things people make are to be safely channeled into one or the other of these metabolisms, then products can be considered to contain two kinds of materials: *biological nutrients* and *technical nutrients*.

Biological nutrients will be designed to return to the organic cycle—to be literally consumed by microorganisms and other creatures in the soil. Most packaging (which makes up about 50 percent by volume of the solid-waste stream) should be composed of biological nutrients—materials that can be tossed onto the ground or the compost heap to biodegrade. There is no need for shampoo bottles, toothpaste tubes, yogurt cartons, juice containers, and other packaging to last decades (or even centuries) longer than what came inside them.

Technical nutrients will be designed to go back into the technical cycle. Right now anyone can dump an old television into a trash can. But the average television is made of hundreds of chemicals, some of which are toxic. Others are valuable nutrients for industry, which are wasted when the television ends up in a landfill. The reuse of technical nutrients in closed-loop industrial cycles is distinct from traditional recycling, because it allows materials to retain their quality: high-quality plastic computer cases would continually circulate as high-quality computer cases, instead of being downcycled to make soundproof barriers or flowerpots.

Customers would buy the *service* of such products, and when they had finished with the products, or simply wanted to upgrade to a newer version, the manufacturer would take back the old ones, break them down, and use their complex materials in new products.

First Fruits:

A Biological Nutrient

AFEW years ago we helped to conceive and create a compostable upholstery fabric—a biological nutrient. We were initially asked by Design Tex to create an aesthetically unique fabric that was also ecologically intelligent—although the client did not quite know at that point what this would mean. The challenge helped to clarify, both for us and for the company we were working with, the difference between superficial responses such as recycling and reduction and the more significant changes required by the Next Industrial Revolution.

For example, when the company first sought to meet our desire for an environmentally safe fabric, it presented what it thought was a wholesome option: cotton, which is natural, combined with PET (polyethylene terephthalate) fibers from recycled beverage bottles. Since the proposed hybrid could be described with two important eco-buzzwords, "natural" and "recycled," it appeared to be environmentally ideal. The materials were readily available, market-tested, durable, and cheap. But when the project team looked carefully at what the manifestations of such a hybrid might be in the long run, we dis-

covered some disturbing facts. When a person sits in an office chair and shifts around, the fabric beneath him or her abrades; tiny particles of it are inhaled or swallowed by the user and other people nearby. PET was not designed to be inhaled. Furthermore, PET would prevent the proposed hybrid from going back into the soil safely, and the cotton would prevent it from re-entering an industrial cycle. The hybrid would still add junk to landfills, and it might also be dangerous.

The team decided to design a fabric so safe that one could literally eat it. The European textile mill chosen to produce the fabric was quite “clean” environmentally, and yet it had an interesting problem: although the mill’s director had been diligent about reducing levels of dangerous emissions, government regulators had recently defined the trimmings of his fabric as hazardous waste. We sought a different end for our trimmings: mulch for the local garden club. When removed from the frame after the chair’s useful life and tossed onto the ground to mingle with sun, water, and hungry microorganisms, both the fabric and its trimmings would decompose naturally.

The team decided on a mixture of safe, pesticide-free plant and animal fibers for the fabric (ramie and wool) and began working on perhaps the most difficult aspect: the finishes, dyes, and other processing chemicals. If the fabric was to go back into the soil safely, it had to be free of mutagens, carcinogens, heavy metals, endocrine disrupters, persistent toxic substances, and bio-accumulative substances. Sixty chemical companies were approached about joining the proj-

ect, and all declined, uncomfortable with the idea of exposing their chemistry to the kind of scrutiny necessary. Finally one European company, Ciba-Geigy, agreed to join.

With that company’s help the project team considered more than 8,000 chemicals used in the textile industry and eliminated 7,962. The fabric—in fact, an entire line of fabrics—was created using only thirty-eight chemicals.

The director of the mill told a surprising story after the fabrics were in production. When regulators came by to test the effluent, they thought their instruments were broken. Af-



CUSTOMERS SHOULD BUY THE SERVICE OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS, AND WHEN THEY HAVE FINISHED, OR WANT TO UPGRADE, THE MANUFACTURER SHOULD TAKE BACK THE OLD ONES AND USE THEIR COMPLEX MATERIALS IN NEW PRODUCTS.

THE IDEA THAT HUMAN INDUSTRY DESTROYS THE NATURAL WORLD, OR THAT EXCESSIVE DEMAND CAUSES ENVIRONMENTAL ILLS, IS A SIMPLIFICATION. NATURE—INDUSTRIOUS, CREATIVE, EVEN “WASTEFUL”—IS NOT EFFICIENT BUT EFFECTIVE.

ter testing the influent as well, they realized that the equipment was fine—the water coming out of the factory was as clean as the water going in. The manufacturing process itself was filtering the water. The new design not only bypassed the traditional three-*R* responses to environmental problems but also eliminated the need for regulation.

In our Next Industrial Revolution, regulations can be seen as signals of design failure. They burden industry, by involving government in commerce and by interfering with the marketplace. Manufacturers in countries that are less hindered by regulations, and whose factories emit *more* toxic substances, have an economic advantage: they can produce and sell things for less. If a factory is not emitting dangerous substances and needs no regulation, and can thus compete directly with unregulated factories in other countries, that is good news environmentally, ethically, and economically.

A Technical Nutrient

SOMEONE who has finished with a traditional carpet must pay to have it removed. The energy, effort, and materials that went into it are lost to the manufacturer; the carpet becomes little more than a heap of potentially hazardous petrochemicals that must be toted to a landfill. Meanwhile, raw materials must continually be extracted to make new carpets.

The typical carpet consists of nylon embedded in fiberglass and PVC. After its useful life a manufacturer can only downcycle it—shave off some of the nylon for further use and melt the leftovers. The world's largest commercial carpet company, Interface, is adopting our technical-nutrient concept with a carpet designed for complete recycling. When a customer wants to replace it, the manufacturer simply takes back the technical nutrient—depending on the product, either part or all of the carpet—and returns a carpet in the customer's desired color, style, and texture. The carpet company continues to own the material but leases it and maintains it, providing customers with the *service* of the carpet. Eventually the carpet will wear out like any other, and the manufacturer will reuse its materials at their original level of quality or a higher one.

The advantages of such a system, widely applied to many industrial products, are twofold: no useless and potentially dangerous waste is generated, as it might still be in eco-efficient systems, and billions of dollars' worth of valuable materials are saved and retained by the manufacturer.

Selling Intelligence, Not Poison

CURRENTLY, chemical companies warn farmers to be careful with pesticides, and yet the companies benefit when more pesticides are sold. In other words, the companies are unintentionally invested in wastefulness and even in the mishandling of their products, which can result in contamination of the soil, water, and air. Imagine what would happen if a chemical company sold intelligence instead of pesticides—that is, if farmers or agro-businesses paid pesticide manufacturers to protect their crops against loss from pests instead of buying dangerous regulated chemicals to use at their own discretion. It would in effect be buying crop insurance. Farmers would be saying, “I’ll pay you to deal with boll weevils, and you do it as intelligently as you can.” At the same price per acre, everyone would still profit. The pesticide purveyor would be invested in *not* using pesticide, to avoid wasting materials. Furthermore, since the manufacturer would bear responsibility



for the hazardous materials, it would have incentives to come up with less-dangerous ways to get rid of pests. Farmers are not interested in handling dangerous chemicals; they want to grow crops. Chemical companies do not want to contaminate soil, water, and air; they want to make money.

Consider the unintended design legacy of the average shoe. With each step of your shoe the sole releases tiny particles of potentially harmful substances that may contaminate and reduce the vitality of the soil. With the next rain these particles will wash into the plants and soil along the road, adding another burden to the environment.

Shoes could be redesigned so that the sole was a biological nutrient. When it broke down under a pounding foot and

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interacted with nature, it would nourish the biological metabolism instead of poisoning it. Other parts of the shoe might be designed as technical nutrients, to be returned to industrial cycles. Most shoes—in fact, most products of the current industrial system—are fairly primitive in their relationship to the natural world. With the scientific and technical tools currently available, this need not be the case.

Respect Diversity and Use the Sun

A LEADING goal of design in this century has been to achieve universally applicable solutions. In the field of architecture the International Style is a good example. As a result of the widespread adoption of the International Style, architecture has become uniform in many settings. That is, an office building can look and work the same anywhere. Materials such as steel, cement, and glass can be transported all over the world, eliminating dependence on a region's particular energy and material flows. With more energy forced into the heating and cooling system, the same building can operate similarly in vastly different settings.

The second principle of the Next Industrial Revolution is "Respect diversity." Designs will respect the regional, cultural, and material uniqueness of a place. Wastes and emissions will regenerate rather than deplete, and design will be flexible, to allow for changes in the needs of people and communities. For example, office buildings will be convertible into apartments, instead of ending up as rubble in a construction landfill when the market changes.

The third principle of the Next Industrial Revolution is "Use solar energy." Human systems now rely on fossil fuels and petrochemicals, and on incineration processes that often have destructive side effects. Today even the most advanced building or factory in the world is still a kind of steamship, polluting, contaminating, and depleting the surrounding environment, and relying on scarce amounts of natural light and fresh air. People are essentially working in the dark, and they are often breathing unhealthful air. Imagine, instead, a building as a kind of tree. It would purify air, accrue solar income, produce more energy than it consumes, create shade and habitat, enrich soil, and change with the seasons. Oberlin College is currently working on a building that is a good start: it is designed to make more energy than it needs to operate and to purify its own wastewater.

Equity, Economy, Ecology

THE Next Industrial Revolution incorporates positive intentions across a wide spectrum of human concerns. People within the sustainability movement have found that three categories are helpful in articulating these concerns: equity, economy, and ecology.

Equity refers to social justice. Does a design depreciate or enrich people and communities? Shoe companies have been blamed for exposing workers in factories overseas to chemicals in amounts that exceed safe limits. Eco-efficiency would reduce those amounts to meet certain standards; eco-effectiveness would not use a potentially dangerous chemical in the first place. What an advance for humankind it would be if no factory worker anywhere worked in dangerous or inhumane conditions.

Economy refers to market viability. Does a product reflect the needs of producers and consumers for affordable products? Safe, intelligent designs should be affordable by and accessible to a wide range of customers, and profitable to the company that makes them, because commerce is the engine of change.

Ecology, of course, refers to environmental intelligence. Is a material a biological nutrient or a technical nutrient? Does it meet nature's design criteria: Waste equals food, Respect diversity, and Use solar energy?

The Next Industrial Revolution can be framed as the following assignment: Design an industrial system for the next century that

- * introduces no hazardous materials into the air, water, or soil
- * measures prosperity by how much natural capital we can accrue in productive ways
- * measures productivity by how many people are gainfully and meaningfully employed
- * measures progress by how many buildings have no smokestacks or dangerous effluents
- * does not require regulations whose purpose is to stop us from killing ourselves too quickly
- * produces nothing that will require future generations to maintain vigilance
- * celebrates the abundance of biological and cultural diversity and solar income

Albert Einstein wrote, "The world will not evolve past its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation." Many people believe that new industrial revolutions are already taking place, with the rise of cyber-technology, biotechnology, and nanotechnology. It is true that these are powerful tools for change. But they are only tools—hyperefficient engines for the steamship of the first Industrial Revolution. Similarly, eco-efficiency is a valuable and laudable tool, and a prelude to what should come next. But it, too, fails to move us beyond the first revolution. It is time for designs that are creative, abundant, prosperous, and intelligent from the start. The model for the Next Industrial Revolution may well have been right in front of us the whole time: a tree. ☘

Journalism Today

by IAN FRAZIER

*An intimate look at a great citizen
(I'd like to work for)*

MITCHELL Walter Mitchell, controlling stockholder and chairman of the board of the Amalco Corporation, arrived at the Hotel Françoise at eight-thirty sharp in his late-model Clemson Bravado, of which only one has ever been made. (In 1997 Amalco provided a start-up loan to my wife's mail-order-seafood firm.) "Chick" Mitchell, as he was nicknamed by longtime pal Bill Squires (who provided a separate loan to the firm), hopped lightly to the pavement, followed by his wife Rusty, another wife, and the man who cleans the pool. Leaving the car and its support team under the hotel's long row of acacia trees (I have occasionally done publicity work for the hotel), CEO Mitchell and his party made their way to the palatial private elevator in back that you've never seen.

In honor of his seventieth birthday and how much money he has, tonight's party would be the culmination of a series of parties all sponsored by people. Celebrities from the worlds of business, television, and masonry assembled in venues like this across the country to show Chick Mitchell their love and appreciation. (Mr. Mitchell agreed to be interviewed for this article in return for text and photo approval.) As he entered the lavishly decorated ballroom, the orchestra began to play the theme music from Amalco's latest box-office smash, *Whichever* (I served as a nonunion consultant on that film, and received financial compensation and a tote bag).

Fontanelle Phillips, whose weekly cable news show was originally Mitchell's idea and who was the only media star invited to Mitchell's recent wedding in Monaco (my attorney and I briefly operated a hair salon for Prince Rainier), surrounded the Mitchell entourage with television lights for a live interview.

"[I very much enjoy being] here this evening," Mitchell was heard to say, as the flashes from many cameras lit up his rather sensual good looks and familiar mane of wavy white hair. "[Tonight is absolutely the thrill of a lifetime for me.]"

The interview done, Mitchell and par-

ty retired to a corner of the semiprivate Don Kirschner Room, adjoining the ballroom, where they received admirers a few at a time. As waiters and editors scurried about bringing trays and matters that had to be attended to even at this festive moment, others led individuals selected for short conversations to Mitchell's table. (For an off-the-books hourly wage and tips, I performed this task as a regular part of my reportorial duties.) There was Shreve Mycroft, of NonTel; Willy Brandt Jr., head of the European office; Michael Weiss, of West Hollywood TGI; Mr. Mitchell's brother, Norman, representing the em-



Illustration by Barry Blitt

Access to Mr. Mitchell had been arranged for me by a New York firm that does that, but the hour for the interview came and went with no notice by Mr. Mitchell or his staff. (Mitchell denies this for the record.) Chick Mitchell is one of the three or four most powerful men, as well as a skilled amateur magician and one of the leading owners of netsuke, in the world. Naturally, he cannot be expected to remember everything. (I don't have to do this.) Very often in the course of a day he will make more than 10,000 telephone calls. (If

OVER a gourmet breakfast Mr. Mitchell outlined several important financial transactions he has in the works, but all the facts and figures flew right out of my ditzy head, I'm afraid—something about foreclosing on Maine? And about how he's going

One wonders what a person like Chick Mitchell can still find to occupy his almost boundless talents, sitting here in the lap of everything he ever wanted to achieve (spin © the Fern-Kellstrom Agency). (I could always teach, I suppose.) Sipping from a cup of exquisite coffee he let me have some of, I posed this question to him. In reply, Mr. Mitchell smiled warmly (Mitchell disputes the adverb) and said, "Well, you know"—(Tape ran out here) "[I've always thought of you as my own son, Roger (not my real name), and I hoped that someday you and all the folks you work with over there could come and work for me at much higher salaries and be a part of the Amalco family.]" (New tape inserted)—"time for you to leave now."

What more can I say? The man is, quite simply, a genius. He is the single most important individual of our era, and we cannot imagine what our lives would have been like otherwise. Let me put it this way: we love this man. One exaggerates only slightly, but perhaps excusably, when one declares that Mitchell Walter Mitchell is the living incarnation of God (not available at some locations). Chick Mitchell has remade us all in his image, and we are infinitely better off for the change. (Call me.) What with the contributions this man has given to humanity, he should never pay another dime in taxes. (I owe Visa in the high five figures, FYI.) Did I mention that in his spare time he paints in watercolor better than Bonnard? (Before 6:30, leave message on my machine.) ☀

Why did he promise me
that we would build ourselves
an ark all by ourselves
out in back of the house
on New York Avenue
in Union City New Jersey
to the singing of the streetcars
after the story
of Noah whom nobody
believed about the waters
that would rise over everything
when I told my father
I wanted us to build
an ark of our own there
in the back yard under
the kitchen could we do that
he told me that we could

—W. S. MERWIN

My Weddings

by ERIKA KROUSE

*I'm single because
I was born that way. —Mae West*

MY first wedding was Aunt Marcia's second. I wore a straw hat with a baby-blue ribbon. The church was like an old schoolroom. Before the "I do," before the kiss, I fainted away in the pew, and my mother carried me out the back door, rolling her eyes.

Queasy, I sat on the cement steps. "You'd better not do that at *your* wedding," my mother told me, and spat on a handkerchief to wash my face. I started to cry, because I was confused, and because I had lost my hat. My mother touched my tears with the corner of the handkerchief. "There," she said, "that's a little more appropriate." When I got home, even before I unbuckled my patent-leather shoes, I opened the big blue dictionary and looked up "appropriate."

MY friend Pamela liked to play Bride. She was usually the bride, since we played at her house. I was usually the minister.

We had wrapped her head in a bed sheet with lace doilies stapled to it. Her bouquet was green and red tissue paper. She wore her best dress-up clothes—orange beads, and a pink evening gown that trailed behind her. The only trouble was, she kept stepping on it in front. "This stupid thing," she said as she walked down the hallway, while I sang "Here comes the bride" in my loudest, most celebratory voice.

"Hey," I said as she approached the cardboard-box altar. "Your dress isn't white."

"So?"

I tried a different approach. "When can I be the bride?"

"After I'm the bride," Pamela said, adjusting her veil.

I knew that this offer meant nothing. A second bride was no kind of bride.

"Do you take this man to be your awfully wedded husband?" I said in a bored voice.

"I do." Pamela was demure, holding her bouquet lightly in her fingers.

"Kiss the bride."

Pamela kissed the air passionately.

After the kiss I stood at the altar, and Pamela looked at me. The bouquet dangled from her hand.

I suddenly remembered. "Oh—throw the bouquet."

She threw it, and I ran from the altar to pick it up. It withered in my clutch. Pamela's ankle suddenly lopped sideways, and her foot fell out of the large shoe.

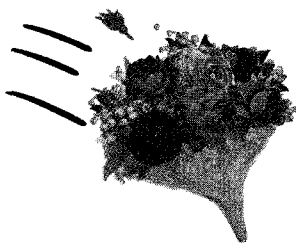
"What happens next?" I asked.

SAM visited me in September, and I drove him to Rocky Mountain National Park. Sam wanted pictures of elk, bighorn sheep; he wanted a mountain lion. I pulled the car over for every herd of animals. Sam jumped out with his point-and-shoot every time. He paused. The elk stared right at him. The bighorn sheep tossed its big head in Sam's face. One after another, the animals stood still and then finally leaped away, disgusted, as Sam lowered his camera. "Missed it."

We walked down the street in Estes Park with ice-cream cones. "My wife," Sam said, "will be intelligent, educated, and ambitious—yet," with a finger raised, "will want to have approximately five to seven children."

"Bullshit, Sam," I said, and hit his hand as if it were a tennis ball. A penny fell from the change in his grip, and he bent to pick it up.

"Does it work the same when it's your penny?" I asked. "Do you get good luck when you pick it up?"



She had the whole wedding planned in advance. All she had
to add was the name on the cake

"No, but I'll drop it again if you like. You can pick it up and get lucky." He dropped it, and it made a cheap sound on the pavement.

I bent down to pick it up. It was shiny and new. When I straightened up, Sam held out his hand. I put my hand there, and he pulled his away. Then he held it out again. I dropped the penny into the center of his palm. He put it in his pocket.

Two months later he called and said, "I'm getting married. I'm in love. We took a compatibility test and scored way high."

She had the whole wedding planned in advance. Before she even met him. In a laminated pink notebook, with sketches and prices. All the songs, all the special readings by Kahlil Gibran. All she had to add was the initials on the napkins, the name on the cake.

So easy, so few decisions for him to make. He lucked out on a girl like that, I told him.

MY mother called me at my soon-to-be-old apartment the day that Johnny and I were moving in together across town. "The phone'll be disconnected any minute," I told her, kicking a wad of crumpled-up newspaper against the cabinet door. It bounced back to my toe, and I did it again.

"Don't do it, don't do it," she said. She was crying. "Don't do it."

"We already signed the lease. There's a big orange moving truck outside. Johnny sprained his groin trying to lift the couch with the Hide-A-Bed."

THE ODDS

We watch TV from bed, on satin sheets.
The hockey game is a dead heat;
our team will not relinquish hope despite
the dismal odds. By midnight
the score gets worse, cramped muscles fail,
the lines get slack, the coaches rail
against the referees, and time is running out.
But champions are made without
the normal fear of loss, and ours slog
on with bloodied shins and pockets clogged
with ice. Desperate, we run the clock ourselves:
we scallop, fillip, sweep then delve,
we burrow, borrow, bellow, bless,
rend, render, root without rest.

—TERESA CADER

"But what will he think of you? What will he think of me?"

"Mom, he doesn't even know you."

"Put him on the phone."

I argued, but she was silent until I handed the phone to Johnny, who was sweating, holding an empty canary cage.

"Yes, I understand. Yes. . . . No. . . . No. . . . Yes."

He handed the phone back, and I asked my mother, "Okay, what did you say?"

"None of your beeswax."

After we hung up, I asked Johnny what she had said, and he said, "I couldn't begin to tell you." But he put his sweaty arm around my shoulders and told me that he would pack the rest of the truck himself. That I should sit alone for a while and contemplate. That if I had any doubts, to tell him today.

ALCOHOL was served, champagne wreathed with cool white cloth napkins, although this bride was a Seventh-Day Adventist. We knew her through Johnny's job. The day was cold and misty, but heat blowers had been installed in the tents. As I walked too close past one of them, it mangled my stockings in one hot blow. I looked down at the strings of mesh, fused together in thin snakes. Johnny laughed and offered me his pants.

A young couple stood at the cake table, drinking nonalcoholic champagne. The woman, who had glasses and a frumpy haircut, smiled a lot. She wore a long angora sweater dress with a matching cardigan draped over her shoulders. Hey, I thought, you're my age. You can't do that.

She said, "I don't know. This champagne doesn't taste nonalcoholic. It's just a little too convincing."

"I don't care," her husband said. "It is what it says it is."

I concentrated on standing upright on the wet earth. But my spike heels sank into the mud, and my shoes kept getting stuck.

"Our wedding had no champagne," the wife said. "So you couldn't get them mixed up, nonalcoholic and alcoholic champagne. We just didn't serve any. Just coffee, tea, like that."

"Are you an alcoholic?" I asked.

"Certainly not," she said.

I was thinking about the word "certainly" and how I rarely heard it in conversation anymore. Then I realized that they probably couldn't drink because of their religion, and I slapped my forehead with my palm, while my heels dove into the ground again.

"Mosquito?" the husband asked politely.

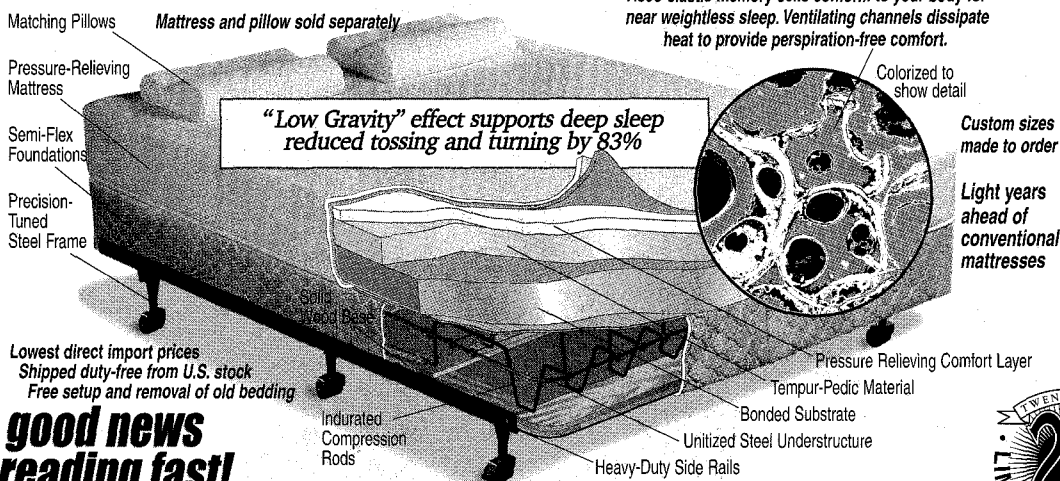
She was a marketing manager, and he was an accountant. They worked for the same company, and had been married since they were both nineteen.

"And you?" they asked.

"Oh, not much. Part-time sometimes, temporary other times."

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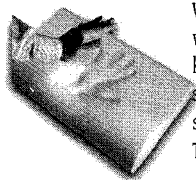
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"Who are you here with?"

I pointed to Johnny with the bottom of my champagne glass. At that moment he was showing a woman how he could click his heels together in the air. The woman laughed and applauded. Some mud splattered on her shin from the heels of his shoes.

I said, "Johnny there. I live with him."

"Ah," the husband said. "You're married to Johnny."

"No. I live with him."

They nodded. The wife said, "Well, then," and brushed her husband's shoulder. Her long nails made scraping noises on the tightly woven cloth. They moved together toward a couple under a dripping tree. "Oh, Seth, Marie," the wife said.

I stood alone again, holding my glass in my hand. After all, I was what I said I was.

JOHNNY and I were underdressed for Sam's wedding. Johnny wore a big white shirt and no tie, and I wore a kimono. Nobody talked to us, but a big band was playing, so we drank a lot of wine and headed toward the floor. First we tried a polka, then a jitterbug, then a tango. Johnny pushed me into a bridesmaid's bare back, and I stepped backward, detaching her foot from its satin pump. "I'm sorry," I told her, and whispered to Johnny, "Why can't you lead worth a damn?"

I walked outside. Standing in front of me was a statue of Hiawatha, with Minnehaha in his arms. Her dress hung in strips, and his biceps barely bulged under her weight.

I heard Johnny walk up behind me. "See that?" I pointed to the statue. "Is that how it's supposed to be?" I turned around, but it wasn't Johnny, it was Sam, the groom.

"Yeah," he said, "but you take what you can get." We looked through the window at the wedding guests, and at Johnny dancing with the bride. They were beautiful, the whites blurring together, the bride ringing on his arm like a giant bell. They could have been any two people that you had seen once and forgotten.

BUT it wouldn't feel like a wedding if we drove to Vegas and got married by an Elvis impersonator," I said, holding a spatula. "We could act like it didn't mean anything." In the pan the eggs chugged like a motor.

"Do you really want to get married in Las Vegas?" Johnny asked, next to the stove.

"No," I said, confused. "No, I don't really want to get married."

"Good. Me neither. After Sally, I promised myself never again."

"What if you think about wanting to marry me and I think about wanting to marry you? And we'll both know that we won't do it—that we'll promise not to do it."

"But I don't want to."

"Even with me?"

"What are you talking about? You hate all this. What is it that you want? The wedding part?"

"No. I couldn't stand to be around my family for a whole day."

"Do you want to be married?"

"No. Everyone would expect me to take your last name. Get fat."

"Everyone who?"

"Just everyone."

I had meanwhile flipped the eggs for the second time, so the yolks were face up and coated with a doughy white film. Johnny turned the burner knob to OFF.

I looked around the yellow kitchen, with yellow linoleum peeling at the edges.

"I hate yellow," I said.

"Well, that's what you get when you rent," Johnny said.

"Listen, honey. I love you. I

don't know what you're asking me for."

"I want to be that important."

"To whom?"

I started crying, sliding the eggs from the pan onto a plate. They had sat too long in the hot pan and were now rigid, even the yolks.

"I want you to want me like that. I want you to love me that much. As much as you loved Sally."

Johnny ran his fingers through his short hair and looked at



me blearily. "It wasn't about love with Sally. It was about marriage. It was never about love."

"I still want you to love me that much."

He looked at the plate and then at my face. His voice was scorched and halting. "Do you love me that much?" he asked.

I INTRODUCED Nancy and Gary at an informal wedding reception. Nancy was Johnny's co-worker, one of those embarrassing guests who laugh too loudly at everything everyone says. Gary had wispy hair and permanently flared nostrils. He had once followed me home telling me about his pet lizards.

They talked at the buffet table for two hours, after the reception had moved outdoors, after the keg had burped its last. Nancy flushed red. Her voice became even louder, her shoulders even wider. She's in love, I thought, and turning into a man.

Nancy finally left after saying good-bye for thirty minutes. Gary stayed, holding an empty plastic cup. "Go after her," I whispered, and he hesitated until he saw her brake lights ignite in the parking lot. Then he ran toward her, waving with both arms.

Gary called me the next day. I had been up all night, and had a purple crescent under each of my eyes. Johnny was still in the bathroom, crying. "I was thinking of asking Nancy to coffee," Gary said.

No, not coffee. A date. Say the word "date." "Say 'date,'" I said. "Bring flowers. Kiss her good-night, with tongue."

He repeated everything. Date. Flowers. A kiss.

In the next room Johnny had emerged from the bathroom and was dividing our books into stacks. He got *The Great Gatsby*. I got *Anna Karenina*. *Romeo and Juliet* we gave away, since in that one both of them died.

GARY told me about his engagement over a hot cup of coffee. The windows were steaming in the coffee shop, and I drew little animals in the mist on the window-pane while he talked.

When Gary proposed to Nancy, it was raining, but he had planned a picnic, so they spread a blanket and sat on a curb. The chicken had gotten soggy, but the potato salad could be saved. He handed her a small white box. Nancy started crying. When she saw that the box contained a pendant, not a ring, she cried harder.

That night they called their parents. His hooted so loudly that Nancy could hear their voices through the receiver from across the room. Her parents were quiet. They said, "Oh."

When she got off the phone, Gary asked, "How did they feel?"

Nancy said, "They said, 'Oh.'"

Gary slept all night, but Nancy walked back and forth in the moonlight. When the sun came up, he said, she was still waiting by the window. He woke up, and she looked at him with her red-rimmed eyes and said, "Okay, I'm ready for it."

"Ready for it?" I asked, suddenly looking away from the window.

"Yeah, I guess she meant that she was okay with the idea," Gary said.

"Is that what she meant?"

"I didn't ask," he said. "Who knows what anyone thinks anyway?"

I PLAYED piano at a Presbyterian wedding, for a friend of a friend. The piano was good, the flowers were fragrant, the dress was misty white. The stained glass was blue.

They looked at each other and cried through the service. They choked on their vows. They said, "Yes, I will." I cried too as they clutched each other and kissed and kissed and kissed.

AT Nancy and Gary's wedding reception Johnny and I did the wave-salute at each other from our respective tables. He had brought a date; she was blonde, drunk, and kissing him. I had no date, but my stomach was the flattest it had ever been.

Johnny asked me to dance. I pulled close to him and smiled at his date.

"I think she's the one," he said.

"The one what?" I asked.

"You know," he said. But I didn't—not really.

I left him alone in the middle of the dance floor and asked someone else to dance. He said no, so I asked someone else. He also said no, looking at his curly-haired date.

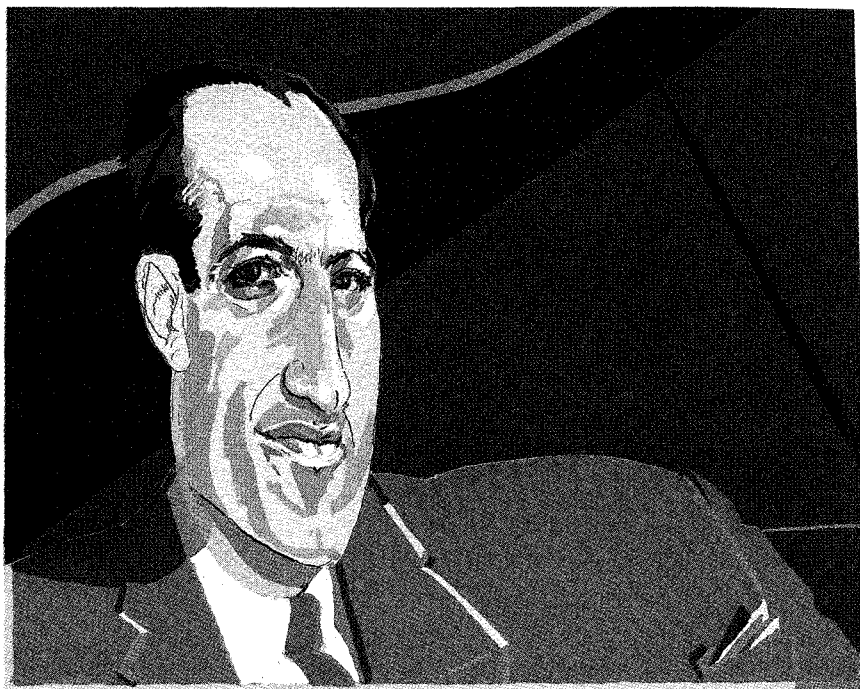
Gary, the groom, waited for me at my abandoned table. "Do you want to dance?"

"No," I said. "I want nothing."

"Look at her," he said, and pointed to his bride. So I did. Her dress was enormous—she was packed in like a lace sausage. She thumped someone on the back so hard that his hors d'oeuvre flew out of his hand and dropped to the floor.

"I love her," Gary said. "I love her completely. My love for her is complete."

And it was. Complete. And I wasn't. Completely. Relief and fear tangled together, like the hands of women clutching in the air for a falling bouquet of something. ♫



Misunderstanding Gershwin

*The composer mixed popular and
classical idioms like no one before or since,
and performers are still baffled*

WHENEVER George Gershwin met a famous composer, so the stories go, he would ask for lessons. He is said to have requested them from Varèse, Schoenberg, Bloch, and Toch, among others, but the two legendary responses are attributed to Ravel and Stravinsky. The dapper Frenchman declined, saying, "Why should you be a second-rate Ravel when you can be a first-rate Gershwin?" The Russian, notorious for his one-liners, supposedly asked Gershwin how much money he made; when Gershwin told him, Stravinsky said, "Then I should take lessons with you." Stravinsky later insisted that the exchange never took place, and claimed that before he had even met Gershwin, he had heard the money story from Ravel. One

Gershwin biographer, Charles Schwartz, tracked down the sources of these stories; after finding that they all led back to the Gershwin family, he speculated that the composer had floated them himself.

A hundred years after Gershwin's birth and sixty-one years after his death, it is difficult to say just who was patronizing whom in these little dances of fake humility and silk-glove rejection. Gershwin's request for lessons, usually made at some fancy party where he had dazzled everyone at the piano, may have seemed charming in an unpolished, American way, or annoyingly naive, or just insulting. Although Gershwin may have thought he was being polite, an unsympathetic ear might have heard him saying that he could buy any composer,

no matter how famous. Stravinsky's alleged response made clear who was the master and who the Lower East Side parvenu. Ravel's, too, was vaguely condescending. Almost all the great European modernists, Ravel and Stravinsky included, had received rigorous musical training, which did not prevent them from writing highly personal and innovative music. To say, however elegantly, that Gershwin's identity might not survive such study was to assume that Gershwin was a freak of nature rather than a true artist.

Even today Gershwin's music exposes the gaps between European and American musical sensibilities and the ambivalence in our musical culture. Two years ago in Vienna I heard the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera, which many American critics have hailed as the finest orchestra in this country, perform Wagner's *Rienzi Overture*, Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*, Strauss's *Don Quixote*, and, almost as an encore, Gershwin's *An American in Paris*—a difficult program, chosen to show off the orchestra's technical prowess and stylistic range. The audience sat on its hands after the first three works, bursting into an ovation only after the Gershwin. In the papers the next day Viennese critics hauled out their usual clichés about American orchestras (too loud, too slick, too impersonal) and saved their praise for the Gershwin—the only kind of music we Americans, apparently, can really play well.

We Americans, however, have yet to make up our minds about Gershwin. Even though he is the one twentieth-century American composer whose music is played all the time and everywhere, Gershwin is an isolated and inimitable figure—the only popular composer of this century whose works have made a lasting dent in the granitic façade of the classical canon. But this achievement is either pushed aside as a kind of embarrassment or described in terms of mindless self-congratulation, with George—the self-made millionaire, the Jewish mother's prize, the sex symbol, the man of the people—playing out every cliché of the American Dream. Jazz historians barely mention the composer of "I Got Rhythm," whose harmonic progression

by David Schiff

supports nearly as much jazz improvisation as the blues; and most accounts of twentieth-century classical music treat Gershwin as a speck compared with giants like Stravinsky, Ravel, and, more recently, Ives. At the same time, though, Gershwin concerts invariably sell out; the all-Gershwin concert by the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas that opens the Carnegie Hall season this fall is the hottest ticket in New York. Gershwin's reputation in this country rises and falls with shifts in the balance of power and prestige between popular and classical music. When pop rules, as it does today, Gershwin is the father of us all. When pop palls, and it may yet again, he is a blot on the musical landscape.

Gershwin will remain unique not because he mixed classical and popular—many other composers have done that—but because of the way he combined the two. His classical pieces could have been written only by a composer whose primary form of expression was the thirty-two-bar popular song; his songs owe their distinctive character to his early study of and abiding love for the classics. All his classical pieces contain tunes that could have appeared in shows, but they also helped him to enrich the harmonic sophistication and expressive warmth of his popular tunes. These contradictory styles and forms distanced Gershwin from other songwriters and classical composers, and they continue to stump most critics of his music.

Gershwin died tragically young, and wrote a scant number of successful classical works—*Rhapsody in Blue*, Concerto in F, the three Preludes for Piano, *An American in Paris*, and *Porgy and Bess*—and an equal number of less-successful pieces, among them *Second Rhapsody* and the early, crude operatic attempt *Blue Monday Blues*. It would be easy to call Gershwin a tunesmith with pretensions, but *Rhapsody in Blue*, Concerto in F, and *An American in Paris* loom so large in the American consciousness—*Rhapsody* is virtually a national anthem—that they demand serious consideration. Yet even these still stand in an ad hoc relation to the classical repertory. Orchestras usually consign any Gershwin to pops concerts. *Porgy and Bess*, rather than entering the operatic repertory, has become a perpetually wandering

opera company of its own, largely because the Gershwin estate stipulated that it be sung only by an all-black cast.

PERHAPS the best way to understand Gershwin is to look at the many ways he has been misunderstood by critics, performers, and other composers. We might categorize these misreadings as those that view Gershwin as a noble savage, a natural but untrained talent; those that say he was great but not really a classical composer; and those that insist on performing him as if he were a classical composer. Wrong, all wrong.

Misunderstanding No. 1—Gershwin as primitive—worked for the composer in Europe, and he even promoted the stereotype. During his lifetime European composers were far more sympathetic to Gershwin than were his American contemporaries. Maurice Ravel and Kurt Weill paid him the highest compliment: large-scale imitation. Ravel quoted *Rhapsody in Blue* in his Piano Concerto in G, and Weill, who after Gershwin's death collaborated with his brother, the lyricist Ira Gershwin, modeled his opera *Street Scene* on *Porgy and Bess*. Prokofiev and Berg also expressed admiration, and Schoenberg, who played tennis with Gershwin in Hollywood, defended him as a “man who lives in music and expresses everything, serious or not, sound or superficial, by means of music, because it is his native language.” Other Europeans may have dismissed Gershwin (notoriously, the meanspirited Glazunov), but certain facts of European music allowed for a sincere acceptance of his talent. Music was surprisingly democratic in Europe—a career open to talent and not limited by class. Many European composers, such as Haydn, Dvořák, Mahler, and Schoenberg himself, came from humble origins, whereas in America the myth persisted that artists had to be young men of means and leisure. Also, the line between serious and popular music was often blurred in Europe. Brahms achieved fame and wealth with dressed-up café music—waltzes and Hungarian dances—and admired Johann Strauss. So, later, did Schoenberg, who orchestrated Strauss waltzes for a fundraiser for his Society for Private Performance, an austere venue for presenting new music. Americans, in contrast, idealized high art and feared any contamination by commerce.

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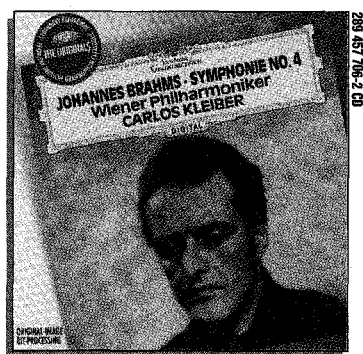
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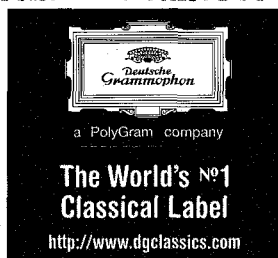
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This cultural background enabled European composers to appreciate an aspect of Gershwin's genius that no conservatory could teach—the unique musical personality that instantly distinguishes so many of his melodies. But the composers tended to assume that this personality was an innate gift—a view too often confirmed by Gershwin's misleading statements about his lack of technique. Few would have suspected that Gershwin was in fact a perpetual, if sporadic, student of classical music. His earliest songs demonstrate that he had already extracted some of the most important lessons classical music has to offer, from a minimum of formal study.

The facts of Gershwin's musical education are simple, though like many other details of his biography they have been given a mythical spin. The Gershwin family acquired a piano in 1910, when George was eleven. As soon as the piano came through the apartment window, Ira later said, George "sat down and played a popular tune of the day": he had already been playing piano at a friend's house. Lessons with neighborhood teachers followed, but only when Gershwin was fourteen did he begin serious piano study, with Charles Hambitzer. Gershwin later wrote that Hambitzer had made him "harmony conscious" and had introduced him to the works of Chopin, Liszt, and Debussy. Hambitzer sent Gershwin to another teacher, Edward Kilenyi, to study harmony in the traditional fashion. Gershwin continued to study with Hambitzer, whom he considered his most important teacher, until Hambitzer died, in the flu epidemic of 1918.

These facts may give the impression that Gershwin pursued more conventional study than he actually did. Gershwin started work as a song-plugger in Tin Pan Alley in 1914, shortly after beginning lessons with Hambitzer, so he never devoted himself exclusively to classical piano. He became a superb performer of his own music (he played one of his works in public as early as 1914), as can be heard on many recordings, but he never performed works from the classical repertory in public; perhaps from the beginning Gershwin thought of himself more as a composer than a concert pianist. Relatively easy pieces such as Chopin's mazurkas and preludes, Liszt's *Liebestraum*, and Debussy's *Arabesques* might not have

turned Gershwin into a virtuoso pianist, but they did serve as models for the harmonic sophistication that would be his major contribution to the popular idiom.

Gershwin may have taken some of his most distinctive musical touches from Chopin's Prelude in E minor, one of the first pieces of real music that piano students encounter. Chopin's melody emphasizes numerous repetitions of the same pitch—four times on B, then four times on A, then down to G-sharp. Each time a note is repeated, the harmony under it changes; while the melody reiterates pitches, the bass line slithers downward chromatically, making the melodic notes sound ever more intense. Alec Wilder, in his classic study *American Popular Song*, was perhaps the first writer to call attention to the importance of repeated notes in Gershwin's melodies, but he never linked these notes to the subtle motion of the bass, which changes their harmonic inflection. Listen to the Chopin and then to "Someone to Watch Over Me"; Gershwin's song is virtually a paraphrase of the prelude.

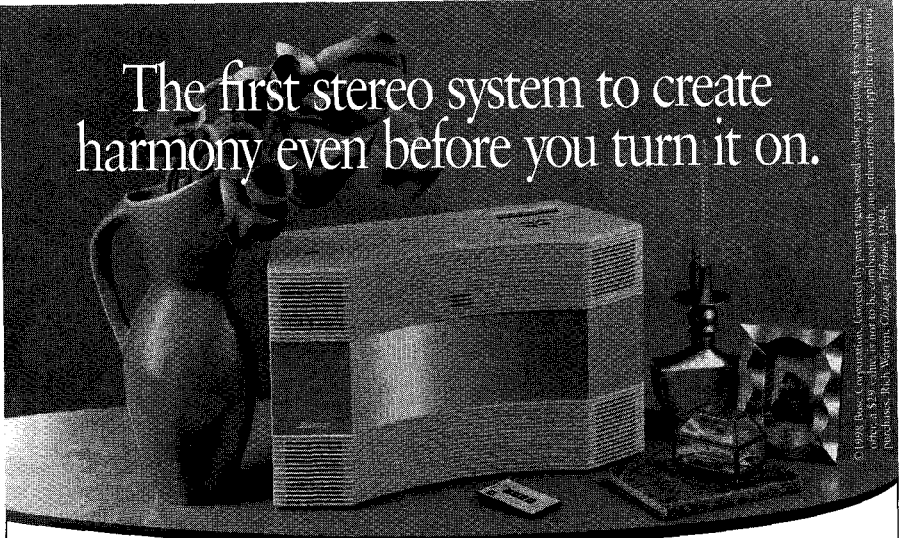
Chopin was a particularly useful model for a Tin Pan Alley composer, because the combination of simple melody and complex bass line suited the rules that popular composers were obliged to follow. A melody had to be as simple as possible. It had to lie within the range of an octave, and it should be diatonic (playable on the white keys of a piano) or, even better, pentatonic (playable on just the black keys). Although a melody had to be crafted so that anyone could sing it, the bass line was written to be played, not sung, and so could be more devious in construction. Gershwin was not the only composer to exploit the contrast of simple melody and complex bass line. Richard Rodgers's "The Girl Friend" and Eubie Blake's "Memories of You" use this device in almost identical ways, but Gershwin explored it so often that it became an essential part of his musical identity. Just think of "S Wonderful," or "That Certain Feeling," or the bridge ("Old Man Trouble, I don't mind him") of "I Got Rhythm."

The lesson Gershwin grasped from Chopin was one that the conservatory might have taught him from Bach. Bach's chorales follow principles very similar to those of pop tunes. The top voice sings a simple diatonic melody, while the bass

and inner voices create harmonic interest. Gershwin's understanding of this strategy makes his tunes very different in character from those of Irving Berlin, who truly was the naïf that some of Gershwin's critics took Gershwin for. Berlin would compose a melody (and write its lyrics), and leave the harmony to others. Gershwin conceived melody and harmony together. The difference does not make Gershwin a better song composer than Berlin, but it may explain why so many of his songs have become jazz standards. Jazz musicians throw away the melody when they improvise. The strong harmonic structures of Gershwin's music imply a melody even when the actual melody is not being played.

Gershwin made the most of his early studies. Since its premiere critics have dismissed *Rhapsody in Blue*, written when Gershwin was twenty-five, as a hodgepodge of tunes. But in fact the impression of formlessness is the work's charm, and it derives from a compositional device found in Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*—a monumental work rarely mentioned in the same sentence as *Rhapsody* but one that Gershwin surely knew well. Beethoven wanted to expand the scale of symphonic form, and for the *Eroica* he came up with what I call the “shaggy-dog story” device. The opening theme of the *Eroica* begins memorably but soon trails off, as if the composer had been distracted. Every time the theme returns, the beginning—call it the head—is the same, but the tail is different, and somehow always incomplete. Only at the end of the first movement does Beethoven give the theme a well-rounded form—his way of keeping the listener hanging through a movement that is twice as long as most earlier symphonic movements.

In *Rhapsody in Blue*, Gershwin used the same device, perhaps a bit more crudely than Beethoven but to the same effect. Gershwin's themes, unlike Beethoven's, are not short phrases but extended pop tunes, mostly of the familiar thirty-two-bar AABA variety. To keep the work from sounding like a medley and to keep the listener engaged, Gershwin lopped off the final phrase of each tune, so that each became, literally, an endless melody. (Try singing the most famous tune of *Rhapsody* through from beginning to end and you'll see that it al-



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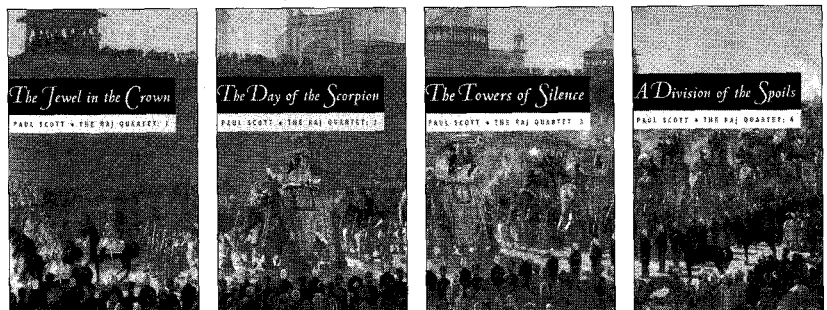
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ways reaches a musical turnaround, not a conclusion.) Unlike Beethoven, however, Gershwin never gave us the completed version of his tunes; *Rhapsody* ends with the sound of ever-greater expectation, an open-ended question. It is an ending that Gershwin would have been asked to correct had he gone to a conservatory.

MISUNDERSTANDING No. 2, which views Gershwin as talented but lacking the credentials of a classical composer, is primarily American. This image, unlike the one of naive genius, damaged Gershwin's reputation, and the evidence suggests that he took it personally. He was keenly aware that he had not undergone the traditional study of Palestrina, for counterpoint; Bach, for harmony and counterpoint; and Beethoven, for form; or the technical studies of ear-training, score-reading, fugue, and orchestration. His musical education, such as it was, had stopped just at the point where Aaron Copland's formative study in Paris with the great teacher Nadia Boulanger began.

Gershwin's feelings of inadequacy may have been heightened by his dismissal by the many American composers who studied with Boulanger. Less secure in their cultural position than their European colleagues, Paris-trained American composers such as Copland and Virgil Thomson may have felt threatened when Gershwin's concert works were taken seriously by critics while theirs were treated as monstrosities. They relegated Gershwin to a lesser realm, even though his works often shared programs with theirs. Thomson admitted the success of *Rhapsody in Blue*, but noted that "rhapsodies . . . are not a very difficult formula, if one can think up enough tunes." Copland, whose modernistically jazzy Piano Concerto of 1927 was dismissed as a "harrowing horror" by one Boston critic and never achieved the success of Gershwin's Concerto in F, later drew a clear line between himself and Gershwin.

Gershwin came from Tin Pan Alley and Broadway musicals, while my only connection with the theater was through [Harold] Clurman—and that meant serious drama. . . . we *must* have been aware of each other, but until the Hollywood years in the thirties, we moved in very different cir-

cles. On one occasion, when we were finally face to face at some party, with the opportunity for conversation, we found nothing to say to each other!

The most lethal anti-Gershwin brief filed by the Copland forces came in Leonard Bernstein's article "A Nice Gershwin Tune," published in *The Atlantic* in 1955, in which Bernstein says in conversation, "I don't think there has been such an inspired melodist on this earth since Tchaikovsky. . . . but if you want to speak of a *composer*, that's another matter."

Gershwin was doing things differently from Copland, but they were both solving the problem of how to bring the sounds of jazz into the concert hall. Copland certainly did not abandon the American vernacular, as Gershwin's most recent biographer, Joan Peyser, has claimed, but he did treat American elements in a way that was sanctioned by European traditions that go back to Haydn. Ravel, writing about the "Blues" movement of his own 1925 Violin Sonata, gave a clear articulation of this approach.

Popular forms are but the materials of construction, and the work of art appears only on mature conception where no detail has been left to chance. Moreover, minute stylization in the manipulation of these materials is essential.

In Europe the high and the frivolous did not compete; high art refined popular materials, transforming the raw into the cooked.

In Gershwin's music the classical element is minutely stylized, not the popular. The piano concerto, for instance, begins with a percussion fanfare that has little to do with the rest of the work but is a saucy send-up of classical pretensions, as is the elaborate faux fugue that surfaces (and vanishes) in the final movement. Although Gershwin's stylization of the classics was most often based on Liszt and Tchaikovsky, he kept abreast of contemporary developments, and turned them to his own purposes. In *An American in Paris* he showed that even without studying with Boulanger he could imitate the insouciance of Les Six—the group of young composers who were all the rage in Paris—and make use of polytonal harmonies out of Stravinsky, while writing tunes that were memorable and completely Gershwin-esque.

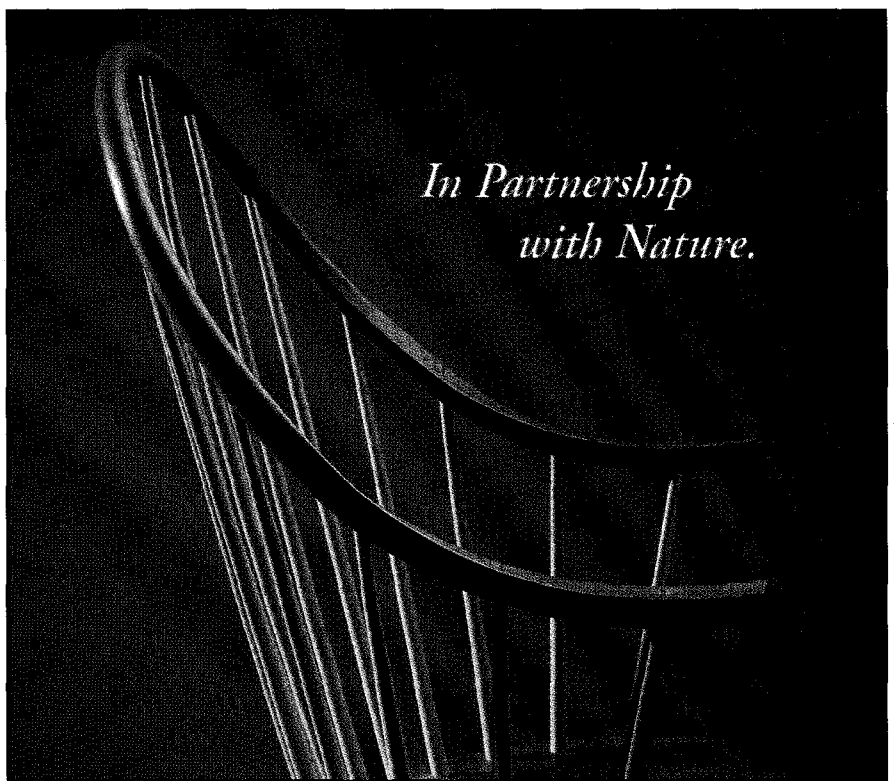
And in "Variations on 'I Got Rhythm'" he conspicuously deployed Schoenberg's twelve-tone method in one variation. Gershwin's use of these classical devices was not inept and half-baked, as his critics claimed; these sly, knowing trivializations opened a dialogue between classical and popular elements in which the popular side—those gorgeous tunes—would dominate.

MISUNDERSTANDING No. 3 is on display at most Gershwin concerts, and I don't mean that to insult the good people who play Gershwin's music. To my ears, just about every classical performance of Gershwin sounds wrong—vapid, mannered, ponderous, self-consciously spiffy. Gershwin's upside-down combination of elements has befuddled performers as well as other composers. He lives on today mainly in his songs—which, fortunately, are almost never performed in the style of singing heard on Broadway in the 1920s. Popular singers, jazz musicians, and arrangers have given the songs ever-new phrasings, inflections, orchestrations, and harmonies, so that they sound fresh.

The classical works, meanwhile, are mired in their texts, and can sound very stale indeed. Classical musicians are respectful of the score to a fault, and will commit all sorts of sins against musical common sense in the name of textual authenticity. Never mind that *Rhapsody in Blue* was scored (not by Gershwin but by Ferde Grofé) to show off the distinctive talents of a "jazz" band that is dead and gone. Classical musicians feel obliged to replicate the sound of the original—an exercise in channeling, not interpretation. Yes, the Chicago Symphony can do an amazingly good imitation of Paul Whiteman's band, but why bother? Textomania in the name of authenticity has also led performers and editors to restore passages that Gershwin himself cut. The latest edition of *Rhapsody in Blue*, for instance, is hailed by its editor, Alicia Zizzo, as the "real" *Rhapsody* for its eighty-odd bars of padding that Gershwin never saw fit to publish or record. Grotesquely inflated versions of *Porgy and Bess* use virtually every scrap Gershwin composed to create an unfocused mess that George and Ira, who spent their whole lives in the theater, would never have tolerated.

Rhapsody in Blue presents the problem of performance more comprehensively than any other Gershwin work. Performers think that they must make it sound jazzy, but it was written before most of the music we think of as jazz had appeared. The Paul Whiteman band could not swing in February of 1924, but neither could the Fletcher Henderson band. The orchestral parts of the work do reflect the jazz style of Whiteman's ensemble, but the solo piano part is a mixture of elements from Zez Confrey, Jimmy Durante, and salon classics; it has little to do with James P. Johnson's stride piano, let alone the "trumpet" style of Earl Hines. Of course, there are several wonderful recordings by Gershwin that can serve as stylistic models, but these are greatly cut and therefore scandalously "inauthentic." My favorite renditions of *Rhapsody*—the jazz interpretations of Glenn Miller and Duke Ellington—dispense with the piano altogether, and with most of the printed score, too.

Perhaps the reason we go on misunderstanding Gershwin is that in his seemingly naive way he still challenges our common wisdom about music. We know that Beethoven is serious and the Spice Girls are trivial. We know that Louis Armstrong played jazz and Paul Whiteman did not. We know that classical musical performances should honor the printed text and match the conditions of a work's premiere as closely as possible (even though some of us who compose also know that a work's premiere is usually the worst performance it will ever get). But this knowledge only drives us into a nostalgic search for the museum verities of the past. Gershwin, a man without a past, created music that comes to life—and demolishes the distinction between serious and trivial—when performers forget about its period trappings and make it sound contemporary. Pop and jazz artists do so without even thinking, but most "echt" twentieth-century music subjects performers to the tyranny of the composer's minute commands. Performers should profit from the freedom that Gershwin scores allow. Old-time modern music now sounds very "period" indeed. Perhaps Stravinsky was right: instead of continuing to give Gershwin posthumous lessons in how to be a composer, we should let him teach us. ☺



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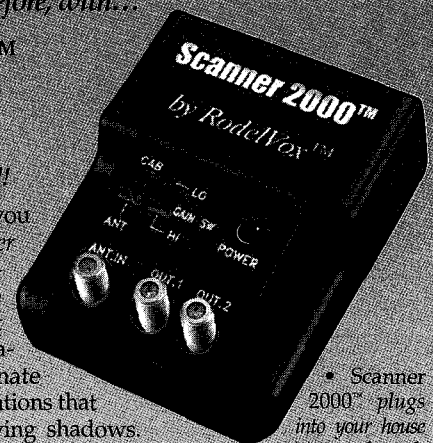
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The Enemy Within

What has come to be known as McCarthyism should, with more respect to chronology and power, be known as Hooverism

by James T. Patterson

MANY ARE THE CRIMES:

McCarthyism in America

by Ellen Schrecker.
Little, Brown, 573 pages,
\$29.95.

THE SOVIET WORLD OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM

by Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes,
and Kyrill M. Anderson.
Yale University, 378 pages,
\$35.00.

WHY did the United States undergo such a troubling and wide-ranging Red scare following the Second World War? As early as the 1950s leading scholars, including Daniel Bell, Richard Hofstadter, and Theodore Draper, struggled to answer this and related questions. Since that time hotly contested debates over the Red scare and McCarthyism have merged with larger culture wars over the role of the left in postwar American life. *Many Are the Crimes*, by Ellen Schrecker, and *The Soviet World of American Communism*, by Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Kyrill M. Anderson, now venture into the treacherous historical terrain of the Red scare and the role of the American Communist Party. Although the authors have devoted much of their scholarly lives to the subject, their new books do not guide us altogether reliably through the minefields of controversy.

Schrecker, a professor of history at Yeshiva University, has made the study of American anti-communism the focus of her career. She is the author of *No*



Illustrations by Daniel Adel

Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities (1986) and *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents* (1994), a handy paperback aimed at students. *Many Are the Crimes* represents more than twenty years of research, which led her to archives throughout the country. Schrecker relies heavily on interviews and on files wrested (through the Freedom of Information Act) from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Lamenting that McCarthyism has been a “scab that will not heal,” she hopes that her account will help us to “reach some kind of closure, and come to terms with the meaning of that troubling chapter of the not-so-recent past.”

Like many historians who have studied the post-Second World War Red scare, Schrecker has little patience for the work of Bell and Hofstadter. Writing in the 1950s, they found the roots of anti-Communist hysteria in the insecurities and resentments of ordinary people who felt threatened by social change. Not so, Schrecker quickly informs us.

Much of what happened during the McCarthy era was the result of a concerted campaign by a loosely structured, but surprisingly self-conscious, network of political activists who had been working for years to drive Communism out of American life. With the onset of the Cold War, these professional anti-Communists were able to sell their program to the nation’s governing elites, who then put it into practice. Though most ordinary people supported what was going on, McCarthyism was primarily a top-down phenomenon.

To dramatize this argument Schrecker sets a broad stage, offering more than a hundred pages of background to describe the worlds of American communism and anti-communism prior to 1945. The Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt wiretapped suspected Communist subversives; it began a “security risk” program that ousted nearly 400 federal employees in 1942; and it drew up the first Attorney General’s list of allegedly disloyal groups, numbering forty-seven. More important, FDR helped to expand the empire of J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, whose obsessive Red-hunting makes him the leading villain in Schrecker’s drama. The FBI, which regularly resorted to illegal wiretaps and bug-

ging, became “the single most important component of the anticommunist crusade and the institution most responsible for its successes—and its inequities.” “McCarthyism,” Schrecker concludes, should more properly be called “Hooverism.”

To place Hooverism in context: one did not have to be a paranoid conspiracy theorist in those days to worry about Communist subversion. Wartime anxieties led the American Civil Liberties Union, of all organizations, to exclude Communists from membership. Morris Ernst, a leader in the ACLU, carried on a “Dear Edgar” correspondence with Hoover, naming names of suspected Communists still in the ACLU.

With the way so well prepared, it is hardly surprising that Cold War anxieties promoted a Red scare, which peaked from 1946 to 1949—before Senator Joseph McCarthy strode demagogically into the spotlight. Red-hunters like Hoover, along with “card-carrying Republicans,” enjoyed great success in “demonizing” American Communists, who were branded as duplicitous, “brain-washed,” secretive to the point of paranoia, and engaged in a monolithic worldwide conspiracy directed from Moscow. A number of corporate leaders and Hollywood moguls were quick to dismiss and to blacklist people suspected of having radical leanings. (Hollywood liberals such as Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra protested these purges. “Before every free conscience in America is subpoenaed,” Garland cried, “please speak up.” Sinatra asked, “If you make a pitch on a nationwide radio network for a square deal for the underdog, will they call you a Commie? . . . Are they going to scare us into silence?”) Some universities bent under the pressure of anti-communism and joined the crusade. “There will be no witch hunt at Yale,” Charles Seymour, the school’s president, pronounced, “because there will be no witches. We do not intend to hire Communists.” The presidential candidate Norman Thomas, the longtime Socialist leader, gave this rationale for policies like Yale’s: “The right of the Communist to teach should be denied because he has given away his freedom in the quest for truth”—has sacrificed his mental independence to Moscow, and so traduced his commitment to academic freedom. Labor leaders in the AFL and the CIO drummed

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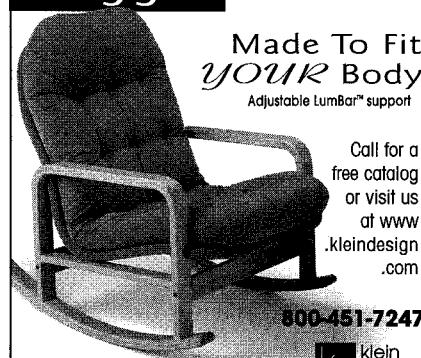
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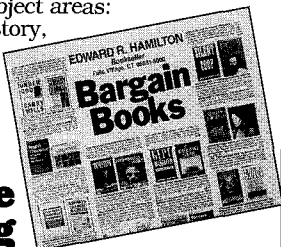
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Communists—many of them outstanding unionists—from their ranks. (Schrecker, citing an unpublished study, estimates that the “body count” of people who lost their jobs and couldn’t find new ones ultimately totaled between 10,000 and 12,000.) Imitating conservatives, liberals soon jumped fearfully onto the anti-Communist bandwagon. Many resorted to metaphors of disease to describe the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA). Hubert Humphrey said the Party was a “political cancer in our society.” Adlai Stevenson proclaimed that it was worse than “cancer, tuberculosis, and heart disease combined.”

The Truman Administration also abetted the Red scare. In 1947, facing pressure from the right, it instituted “loyalty tests” that denied civil liberties to government employees. It later depended heavily on FBI informants to prosecute eleven top leaders of the CPUSA. Their “crime,” as defined by the Smith Act of 1940, was belonging to an organization that advocated the violent overthrow of the government. Upholding their convictions in 1951, Supreme Court Chief Justice Fred Vinson justified restrictions on free speech by citing “the inflammable nature of world conditions, similar uprisings in other countries, and the touch-and-go nature of our relations with other countries with whom petitioners were in the very least ideologically attuned.”

WERE these frightened reactions in any way justified? Schrecker acknowledges that leaders of the Party—secretive, contentious, pawns of Moscow—were sometimes their own worst enemies. But she nevertheless concludes that the fear of Reds in America was vastly exaggerated. Critically evaluating the so-called Venona documents (recently released decrypts of messages sent from the United States to Moscow by Communist agents during the Second World War), she agrees that Julius Rosenberg recruited an espionage ring. Moscow seems to have welcomed data from the ring about radar, jet planes, and other advanced weapons. But Rosenberg’s people (unlike Klaus Fuchs, the physicist-spy who worked on the Manhattan Project) divulged no useful information concerning the atomic bomb. Indeed, very few members of the CPUSA seem

to have engaged in spying. (Schrecker thinks that the jury is still out concerning Alger Hiss.) *Many Are the Crimes* concludes that the prosecution’s evidence against Ethel Rosenberg was weak, and that the government colluded with the judge to ensure that both Rosenbergs would receive the death penalty. This draconian sentence amounted to “judicial murder.”

Having detailed America’s anti-Communist excesses in the late 1940s, Schrecker brings McCarthy onstage three fifths of the way through her drama. He appears as a bit player whose role was to “ratchet up the intensity” of an already fevered crusade—he was the “creature,” not the “creator,” of the Red scare. McCarthy was a shameless liar who claimed to have flown on thirty-two combat missions in the war though he had flown on no more than two, and to walk with a limp from “ten pounds of shrapnel” though he had hurt his foot at a party. McCarthy, Schrecker reminds us, was so reckless that even Hoover ceased to cooperate with him by mid-1953. For these reasons she allots only twenty-five pages to his activities.

In relegating McCarthy to the wings, Schrecker is correct to stress that the Wisconsin senator was a Joe-come-lately to the anti-Communist cause. But her sketchy treatment of McCarthy belies her title, and she skims too rapidly over many highlights of the Red scare after 1950, including the confused and sometimes craven responses of the Eisenhower Administration to the boorish senator who nearly dominated American politics for four years.

I have other, larger reservations about Schrecker’s book. Piling up details about the sins of the anti-Communist crusaders, Schrecker concludes with a long and labored chapter highlighting the ravages of the Red scare, not only from 1945 to 1955 but also in the forty-odd years since then. She would have us believe that McCarthyism “destroyed the left” (Irving Howe, among others, has argued that the CPUSA, blindly following Moscow during the tense years of the Cold War, bears much of that responsibility) and has badly corrupted much of American life since the 1950s—scholarship, scientific research, publishing, philanthropy, films, social reform, labor unions, and the civil-rights

and women's movements. She contends that anti-Communist excesses in the 1940s offered the model for repression of the Black Panthers in the 1960s, for Ronald Reagan's double-dealing concerning the Iran-contra scandal, and for Watergate. McCarthyism promoted a general "sleaziness"—its "main legacy"—that has blighted American politics since that time.

Has McCarthyism had such profound, long-range effects? Schrecker pauses here and there to remind us that many forces have coalesced to cause the decline—as she wants to see it—in the quality of American life since the 1950s. But she then presses on with prosecutorial zeal, essentially dismissing her own caveats, to identify McCarthyism as the source of all manner of subsequent sins.

Schrecker's gloomy indictment leaves the impression that virtually all elites succumbed to the hysteria of the time. Almost no one, it seems, displayed courage. Such a view tends to ignore people who deplored what was happening. The historian Bernard De Voto spoke for many Americans in decrying Hoover's use of "gossip, rumor, slander, backbiting, malice and drunken invention, which, when it makes the headlines, shatters the reputations of innocent and harmless people. . . . We know that the thing stinks to heaven, that it is an avalanching danger to our society." Schrecker says little about Americans who tried to distinguish between Soviet foreign policy, which seemed highly dangerous in the postwar era, and communism within America, which seemed hardly dangerous at all. Members of the Americans for Democratic Action, which receives only cursory attention here, were among the people who sought (at least at times) to make this distinction and to distance themselves from excesses of the Red scare at home while remaining firm in their anti-communism abroad.

Readers of Schrecker's book will also have a hard time understanding what *non-elites* were doing and thinking during these troubled times. Her account does not look at public-opinion polls or electoral results, and it does little to explore the sources of McCarthyism. Can it be said that Red-hunters enjoyed considerable support among religious people who loathed "Godless commu-

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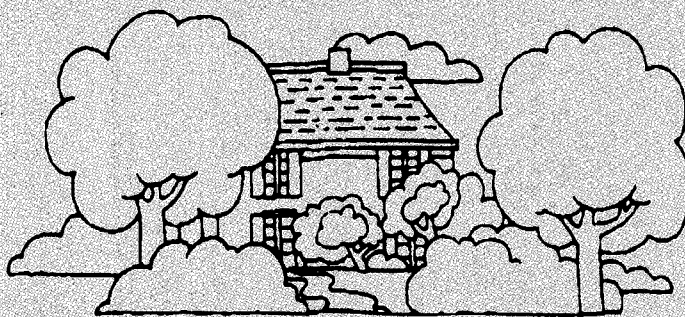
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nism"? Did McCarthy have special appeal among Catholic believers? (John F. Kennedy, scarcely mentioned in the book, seems to have thought so.) What about Americans with backgrounds and relatives in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe? In the absence of solid documentation on the wider world of anti-communism, it is unfortunate that Schrecker's ambitious book focuses so relentlessly on the elites—the bad guys—and fails to dig deeper into the significant social foundations of the postwar American right.

Finally, readers may wonder how the elites managed to develop such power at the time. Were the American people ignorant, hapless pawns of Red-baiters? Missing here is a serious account of how Americans in the 1940s and 1950s perceived the political and military ambitions of the Soviet Union. Although Schrecker repeatedly mentions "the Cold War," she tends to treat it as an abstract, offstage problem that undermined the good sense of people. There is no discussion, for instance, of the coup in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin airlift, or Soviet brutalities in Eastern Europe. Korea gets a few lines here and there but is equated with Vietnam as something that involved the United States in "years of bloody, fruitless warfare." By downplaying the international dimensions of the domestic Red scare (dimensions that featured in the sensational Hiss case), Schrecker robs her story of vitally important context and relegates a generation of elites to the psychiatrist's couch.

THE *Soviet World of American Communism*, which focuses on the international activities of leaders of the CPUSA from 1919 to the mid-1940s, offers a different point of view. Harvey Klehr, a professor of politics and history at Emory University, and John Earl Haynes, a historian of twentieth-century politics at the Library of Congress, are productive scholars who have already written several books critical of the CPUSA. In 1995 they published, with the Russian historian Fridrikh Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism*, a collection (with extensive annotation and commentary) of newly available documents from Moscow. These documents included information about

espionage by the CPUSA, thereby providing much more solid evidence about such activities than scholars had suspected existed. *Secret World* was the first of twenty-five proposed volumes in Yale University Press's ambitious "Annals of Communism" series—books all to be based on documents in the Soviet Union. Klehr and Haynes have now teamed up with Kyrill Anderson, a Russian archivist, to dig into records in Moscow of the Communist International (Comintern) and the CPUSA. They reprint ninety-five documents, many in full, choosing those that focus on "previously unknown or unexpected aspects" of the relation between the CPUSA and the Comintern. Their extensive notes cite many additional documents.

The authors repeatedly slam home their central point: American Communist leaders (and many of the rank and file) checked their brains in Moscow. A few brief quotations will capture both their thesis and their unbending tone: "The CPUSA was never an independent political organization"; "The dictates of the Comintern almost invariably superseded policies offered [by the CPUSA] on the basis of local conditions"; "One finds no documents in the Soviet archives . . . that show American Communist leaders refusing to carry out Comintern orders as a matter of principle"; "Both the CPUSA leaders and the rank and file absorbed Stalin's ideological hatreds as their own"; American Communists wore "special glasses that allowed them to see only what Moscow saw and that rendered all else invisible." For these reasons the CPUSA was in fact "un-American."

According to these documents, CPUSA leaders' subservience to Moscow was total. American Communist officials all but invited the Comintern to choose their leaders, and they acquiesced in sharp turns of Soviet policy—for example, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939—that appalled many Party members in the United States. Klehr et al. argue that top officials of the CPUSA offered no protests against the brutal purges and killings orchestrated by Stalin against his enemies (including some wayward American Communists in the Soviet Union) in the 1930s. The documents also reveal that the CPUSA often depended heavily on funding ("Mos-

cow gold”) from the Soviet Union. As late as 1988 the Soviet Union contributed \$3 million to the Party in the United States.

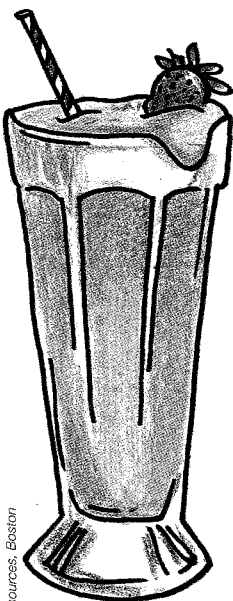
This may not, of course, be the whole story: further research into the enormous Soviet archives may alter the record as given here. Moreover, Klehr and his co-authors sometimes draw larger and questionable conclusions not supported by the documents they print. A case in point concerns a group of Finnish-Americans and Finnish-Canadians who were recruited by Moscow in the 1930s to help rebuild the Karelia region of the Soviet Union, near Finland. Many of these people were apparently executed in the late 1930s by Soviet authorities, but Klehr et al. find no documents indicating that CPUSA leaders intervened or protested against what was happening. The authors’ evidence for the killings, however, comes from accusations in subsequently written memoirs by family members and from survivors—not from the archives. No document offered here unambiguously implicates the CPUSA of the time in knowledge of or a cover-up of such atrocities.

In general, Klehr and his colleagues support a thesis that is neither new nor surprising. As early as 1957, in *The Roots of American Communism*, Theodore Draper established authoritatively that Moscow called the shots for the American Communist hierarchy in the years following the Bolshevik Revolution. We have long known that leaders of the CPUSA obeyed the Soviet Party line thereafter, no matter how dramatically that line changed. As Schrecker’s book shows, such obeisance played nicely into the hands of Hoover and his fellow Red-hunters in the 1940s and 1950s.

What *Soviet World* does not do, however, is establish a broader point that it sometimes seems to advance: that lower-level American Communists more or less blindly followed their leaders. Indeed, as periodic defections from communism in America indicated, not all Party members sold their souls forever. Rather, many were leftists and radicals who had joined the CPUSA during the Great Depression, when the Soviet Union seemed to them to be the only hope against the spread of fascism. Others became members at that time because they had given up on capitalism

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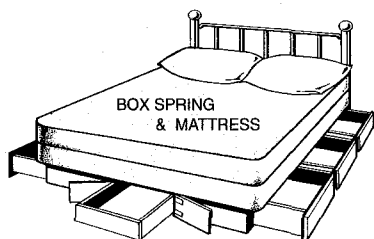
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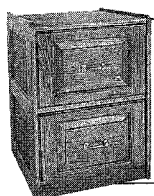
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or because they thought the Party offered the best chance for improvements in working conditions. Communists were strong, for instance, in several CIO unions in the late 1930s and early 1940s. By the late 1940s thousands of such people had left the Party—some because they were disillusioned with its stands on foreign policy after the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 and during the Cold War, others because they had regained some faith in the capitalist system. One of the great ironies of the postwar Red scare is that it broke out while defections from the CPUSA were proliferating.

Communism also developed considerable strength in the 1930s among writers and intellectuals. Whittaker Chambers, who broke with the Party and accused Hiss of espionage, was one. In Hollywood, Party members in the 1930s included Elia Kazan, Budd Schulberg, and Carl Foreman (later the scenarist for *High Noon*). Ring Lardner Jr., who was to become one of the "Hollywood Ten" sent to jail by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (and later the screenwriter for the movie *M*A*S*H*), also had joined the Party in the Depression years. Like thousands of others, these people abandoned the CPUSA. Most of them lamented that they had been obtuse about the Party's submission to dictates from Moscow. But (unlike Chambers) many also continued to support liberal or radical causes.

The experience of one-time Party members like these indicates that scholars are well advised to explore the activities of the CPUSA in the context of broader histories: of ethnic and religious groups, race relations, labor unions, and intellectual life generally in the United States. There were many "worlds" of American communism, not just the small, often pathetic one of the Party leadership.

To be sure, Klehr and his co-authors set a narrower task for themselves than this. They try to tell only part of a larger, complicated story. But even more than Schrecker, they seem eager to prosecute a case—one that threatens to conflate leadership and followership within the Communist Party of the United States. The minefields that have proved so treacherous for earlier scholars of communism and the postwar Red scare still remain to be cleared. ☼

University, Inc.

by David Harvey

THE UNIVERSITY IN RUINS

by Bill Readings.

Harvard University, 238 pages,
\$15.95.

SOME time ago a colleague of mine at a prestigious research university showed me a draft of a mission statement drawn up by senior faculty members. It said that "curiosity driven" research was outmoded, and a far more exciting challenge lay before us: to put our skills to work in the service of government and industry. As a faculty member, I recoiled. Since when had the public interest been encompassed by government and industry alone? And what about those past disasters (the waste and radiation hazards associated with the nuclear program, for example) produced when big business, big government, and big science colluded too closely?

But in retrospect I appreciate the honesty of that mission statement. It signals that a revolution is afoot in higher education. It bluntly says that those who pay the piper (corporations and governments) will surely call the tune. The relevance of universities is on the line. And a recent flood of books, commentaries, and reports all depict the university as a deeply troubled institution.

On the surface that claim sounds dubious. Prestigious institutions are winding up billion-dollar fundraising campaigns, and star professors move from one university franchise to another at ever-increasing salaries. Tuitions have been rising above the rate of inflation for years, while the demand for higher education continues strong.

There are problems, of course. A substantial amount of the teaching is now done by grossly exploited graduate assistants or temporary instructors. Public financing has not kept up, and scientists cannot feed so easily at the federal trough now that the Cold War is over. The cost

of higher education has been increasing rapidly, particularly in research institutions, where equipment and labs absorb millions in the competitive chase to produce cutting-edge research. And relying on student tuitions has its price: universities have to market themselves competitively and deal with students as consumers who noisily claim their rights.

Universities now operate in a much more Darwinian world, where the fit survive and others flounder. Tenure is under threat, bothersome rankings and performance indicators are becoming common, and new university structures are arising to provide professional qualifications at very low cost. But nothing is going on here that has not already gone on in government and business. The shake-out should prove healthy, the argument goes, and bring us a sleeker delivery of higher-education services to match market needs. A dose of private-sector logic will surely help. And to the extent that everyone lives in this kind of world, why should the university be any different?

Internal resentments and resistance abound, of course. Complaints about excessive administrative powers and burdens, "corporatization" and "proletarianization," are everywhere heard. And difficulties attach to applying corporate logic when the "product" is something as undefined as "an educated student" and when there's a modicum of significance to the distinctions between getting an education and getting a qualification, between thinking and mere information processing, between producing knowledge and consuming it. Higher education for what and for whom? And why even bother? It is on this last point that much of Bill Readings's challenging book turns, setting *The University in Ruins* interestingly apart from comparable writings in recent years.

READINGS (who taught comparative literature at the Université de Montréal) argues compellingly that the university has outlived its purpose—a purpose defined two centuries ago, when the nation-state and the modern notion of culture came together to make the university the guardian of national culture. In Europe it helped to solidify national cultures, gave "reason to the common life of a people," and fused "past tradition and future ambition into a unified field of culture." The university embodied an

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Now that Gaza and part of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") have been turned over to the Palestinians, the clamor for peace with Syria becomes ever more strident. Hafez Assad, Syria's president, has left no doubt, and it is generally understood that he will not make peace with Israel unless the Golan is returned to him in its entirety and without any conditions.

What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shelling, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

Syria and its President—Syria is the most destabilizing influence in the Middle East. It is classified by the U.S. State Department as a narcotics-dealing and terrorist state. Its main fury is directed at Israel, which is perceived

as a bulwark of Western influence and civilization, both of which Syria totally rejects.

Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as ruthless as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs, who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of Pan Am flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about the size of Queens, NY. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points

"With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

are defensible and made possible the repulse of 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any

military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

In its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after more than fifty years of war and bloodshed, Israel had been prepared to make far-reaching concessions to Syria on the Golan, in exchange for real peace. But Benjamin Netanyahu, who has promised his people *shalom batuach* (peace with security) is not prepared to give up all of the Golan and to return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to them. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, most of which—with the recent exception of Jordan and of the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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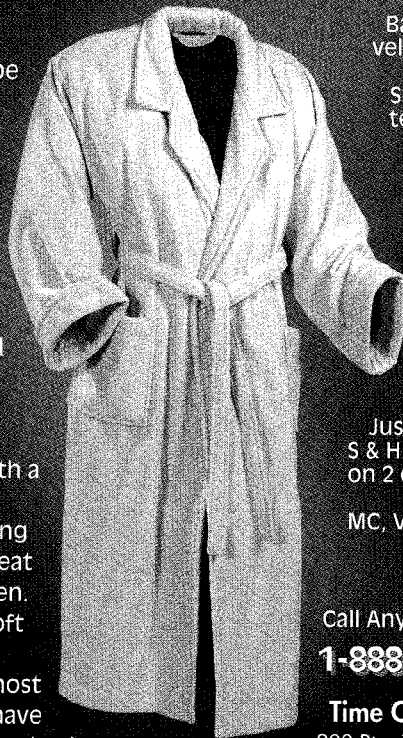
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ideal. In the United States the mission was parallel. But here it was to deliver on a promise—to create tradition, found mythologies, and form a “republican” subject who could combine rationality and sentiment and exercise judgment within a system of consensual democratic governance. The university was where elite citizens went to be socialized and educated.

But globalization of culture as well as of economies, the rise of transnational powers, and the consequent “hollowing out” of the nation-state have undermined this traditional role. So what, Readings asks, “is the point of the University, if we realize that we are no longer to strive to realize a national identity, be it an ethnic essence or a republican will?” What happens when the culture the university was meant to preserve goes global and transnational along with everything else?

This is an intriguing argument. And even if (as I believe) it is only half right, it helps to explain much. From this perspective, for example, Readings is wonderfully insightful on the “culture wars” that have wracked universities and bewildered the public for two decades. Attacks on “the canon” of dead white males signaled the end of the university as a guardian of universal truths and values. Conservatives were right to worry that multiculturalism meant an end to the university as we knew it, but hopelessly nostalgic in their prescriptions. Multiculturalists, by “lending primacy to the cultural,” also missed “the fact that culture *no longer matters* to the powers that be in advanced capitalism—whether those powers are transnational corporations or depoliticized, unipolar nation-states.” Much of the current debate consequently “misses the point, because it fails to think of the University in a transnational framework, preferring to busy itself with either nostalgia or denunciation—most often with an admixture of the two.”

So what is actually going on? How are we to understand the perpetuation of the university as an institution? Readings carefully constructs his answer: The university is now “an autonomous bureaucratic corporation” responsive to the idea that what really matters in today’s world is “economic management” rather than “cultural conflict.” It no longer cares about values, specific ideologies, or even such mundane matters as learning how to think. It is simply a market for the production, exchange,

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and consumption of useful information—useful, that is, to corporations, governments, and their prospective employees.

With devastating skill Readings takes apart the rhetoric of “excellence” with which universities cover the emptiness at their core. Rankings (like those in *U.S. News & World Report*) measure it, and internal budgets focus on it. And the joy of excellence is that we all agree about it. Its invocation “overcomes the problem of the question of value across disciplines, since excellence is the common denominator of good research in all fields,” while all manner of multicultural diversities can be accepted as equally excellent.

The trouble is that excellence is meaningless when it comes to key decisions (for example, to close a classics department and open up a multicultural-studies program). “So to say that excellence is a criterion is to say absolutely nothing other than that the committee will not reveal the criteria used to judge applications.” Those criteria, it turns out, lie elsewhere. The pursuit of excellence allows the university “to understand itself solely in terms of the structure of corporate administration.” A key slippage then occurs, as the quite proper demand that the university be *accountable* gets translated into the reductionist idea that everything is simply a matter of *accounting*.

This is a striking insight. But Readings could have pushed it further. Money is now the measure of all things, and a crude cost-benefit logic pervades administrative decisions. University presidents pontificate about excellence while the bean counters in the back rooms call the shots. The traditional university culture, with its odd sense of community, has been penetrated, disrupted, and reconfigured by raw money power.

I recall an incident some years ago when my own department was rumored to be “in trouble” with the dean. We prepared voluminous documentation to prove how excellent we were. The dean said that he had never questioned our excellence but was interested in only one thing, and it was “colored green.” We were not, apparently, earning enough of it to justify our existence.

The effects of such logic are devastating. The hidden hand of the market distributes resources and rewards so as to ensure a proliferating freedom of market choices in higher education while deny-

ing the capacity to explore alternative values. Money discipline undercuts the freedoms of research and speech promised by tenure and threatens to be worse than McCarthyism in its effects on independent scholarship and critical thought. And it is far more insidious: there is no overt source of oppression to be identified and resisted. Even university presidents are caught within the logic, forced to raise more and more money or economize on costs by whatever means to meet the escalating financial needs of teaching and research.

This is what aligns the university with the economic logic of contemporary capitalism, converting knowledge into information and students into consumers, and transforming the ability to think into a capacity for information processing. It constructs a kind of market in which we are free to choose about issues that, like culture, no longer matter.

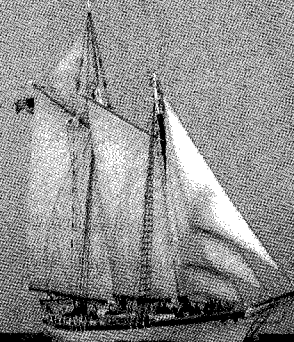
I DO depart from Readings’s diagnosis in some respects. His conception of globalization is too simplistic. Although the nation-state’s role is changing, it is nowhere near as hollowed-out as he claims. New territorial commitments, to locality and region, are emerging, within which the university may be an invaluable economic and cultural leader (think of Quebec and Catalonia). Readings sees the bitter tension between national (or even local, ethnic, or regionalist) commitments and the forces of transnational and cultural globalization too one-sidedly. Furthermore, the modern research university is driven by science, engineering, medicine, and technology. Readings’s claim that the problems arising in these sectors are broadly parallel to those in the humanities is hard to swallow.

If he got that wrong, it casts doubt on the metaphor of the university as a ruin. Readings likes the metaphor not only because it clearly signals the end of the traditional university but also because ruins contain some niches of unpredictability in which the human “addiction” to thinking may perhaps flourish. The university can then be viewed as a potential model space in which a new kind of “dissensual community” might form—a ruined edifice within whose cracks many different flowers can bloom.

But if the university is bowing more and more to corporate values—if it is also a centerpiece for the knowledge-based in-

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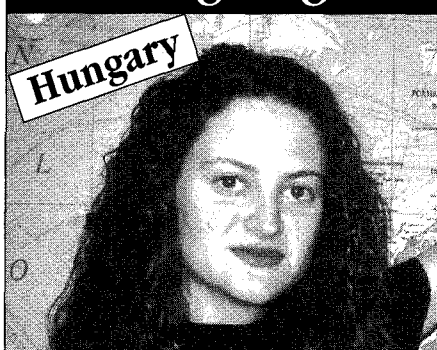
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dustries so essential to economic competitiveness—then it appears more like a modern-day behemoth than a gentle ruin. The university is a battleground where accountability has indeed been coopted into accounting—where empty chatter about excellence evades fundamental questions of values while disguising narrow and brutal conceptions of cost and benefit. It is a battleground where the professionalization of disciplines remains closely guarded, even though that makes no sense in relation to many of the pressing issues we now face, such as global rights and systems of governance and worldwide environmental degradation.

Something plainly has to give, and the powers that be—corporations, governments, wealthy donors, and even parents—broadly know that the university must be reformed. Their overt interventions in curricula and research grow more transparent by the day. The fear of ruinous "tuition wars" in which the more well-endowed universities use their resources to lower tuitions is everywhere apparent (the competition is essentially hidden these days under the category "financial-aid packages"). But beyond this we also see a vast struggle unfolding over appropriate knowledge structures for the twenty-first century. How can we think, Readings

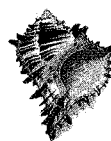
asks, in "an institution whose development tends to make Thought more and more difficult, less and less necessary?" What the transnationals and the international bureaucrats and even the foundations need and want to know is not necessarily all that the public needs or wants to know.

Who decides is a key question. Readings offers a call to arms to those of us who live and work in universities as well as to those on the outside—a call to better understand our position in a changing world, to come out of our professional shells, stop pining for a lost world, and actively seek to construct something different. Change, he insists, "comes neither from within nor from without, but from the difficult space . . . where one is."

Readings invites a conversation on these matters. Sadly, his voice has been silenced. He died in an air disaster shortly before this book was published. So I give him the last word, a fitting epitaph drawn from a remarkable contribution.

Energies directed exclusively toward University reform risk blinding us to the dimensions of the task that faces us—in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences—the task of rethinking the categories that have governed intellectual life for over two hundred years. ☼

BRIEF REVIEWS



Daniel Defoe:

**The Life and Strange,
Surprising Adventures**

by Richard West.

Carroll & Graf, 427 pages, \$26.00.

Defoe turned to writing because he was an inept businessman who lost not only his own money but his wife's substantial dowry. He became "the first master, if not the inventor, of almost every feature of modern newspapers, including the leading article, investigative reporting, the foreign news analysis, the

agony aunt, the gossip column, the candid obituary." He began with a gift for amusing satirical verse, and his political opinions (he was a determined Dissenter and an ardent supporter of William of Orange, the Whig Party, and the Hanoverian succession) kept him busily publishing throughout his controversy-ridden time. He was jailed, put in the pillory, always in debt, and often in hiding from creditors. He was a government secret agent in Scotland. He was never a part of the official literary establishment, so Mr. West cannot provide

any accounts of him by contemporary observers. He tries instead to reconstruct Defoe through his writings, which leads to rather too much description of the novels but works well with the miscellaneous publications and becomes delightful when the biographer gets to Defoe's late account of travels around Britain. He was a sympathetic observer, a self-deprecating humorist, a bit of a fabricator, and an astonishingly shrewd prophet. Defoe's life has steadily absorbing interest, based on the question What will the man do next?

**Cecil Andrus:
Confessions of a Western
Politician**

by Cecil Andrus and Joel Connelly.
Sasquatch Books, 256 pages,
\$23.95.

Mr. Andrus ran for the Idaho state senate in part because John F. Kennedy, campaigning for the presidency, promised a better and more vigorous country. He also wanted improvements to the local school system. He spent \$11 on his campaign and became the youngest senator in Idaho history. He has since served as Jimmy Carter's Secretary of the Interior and as governor of his state for four terms. He considers himself a moderate conservationist, ambitious to preserve the natural environment he loves while finding the means to support a human population decently. He has been denounced for this stand by extremists on both sides. A politician who is denounced by extremists left and right must be both honest and intelligent. Mr. Andrus professes to be retired from politics, and presumably means it, for this conversational, witty, acid memoir will earn him more denunciations—but then, he is rather proud of them.

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D	E	F	L	A	T	E	L	G	O	L	D	E	N
S	A	F	E	T	Y	D	O	W	N	E	A	S	T

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Theme words are GAME, SET, and MATCH. Variations are LIGAMENTS, GILGAMESH, and AGAMEMNON (words containing GAME); SENT, SCENT, and ASCENT (letter additions to SET); and PARIS, LOVE, and SAFETY (titles or phrases with MATCH). Across. 1 S(PANG)LED 11. A + T(TA)IN 12. OVERSEA (homophone) 13. LAIR (rev.) 14. DIM + IN + I'S + H 15. O + RANG 16. O(A + T)CAKE (a Coke anag.) 17. DIALER (rev.) 21. GEODE (G + owed homophone) 27. SCRAM + BLES(s) 30. METE(O)R 32. EST(A + T)ES 34. MUS + I + C (I + sum rev.) 35. BACH + ELOR (role rev.) 37. DEF + LATE (Fed rev.) 38. GOLDIEN 40. DOWN + EA + ST Down. 1. SALON (odd letters) 2. PTARMIGAN (anag.) 3. NARNIA (anag.) 5. EPIC + ENE 6. A + V + I + ANS 8. CRICKET (pun) 9. ES + SAY 10. T(AMEN)ESS 14. D + OLES 19. A + D(HE'S)IVE'S 20. I + IPREADS (diapers anag.) 23. MI(RAC)LE (car rev.) 24. TREMOLO (anag.) 25. M(ATE)R 27. S(L)EET 28. BOULLE (anag.) 29. STAFF (double def.) 33. THAT (hidden)

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clubs as a pink-glazed doughnut. When he is offered the post of head curator at an unfinished provincial museum, he flees his stuffy job in Tokyo and lands in the shadow of Mount Fuji. The museum is to contain 365 views of the mountain painted by an artist, unsuccessful in his own day, named Takenoko—last of the "pictures of the floating world" school. These paintings mostly belong to the Ono family, and it is the oldest brother, the wealthy owner of a robotics factory, who wants the museum. All the Onos are a bit mad, and they ultimately drive Yukawa mad as well—at least by ordinary standards. The layout of the book is designed to agitate, if not actually madden, the reader. Yukawa's story is paralleled, in marginal notes, by those of the other characters, forcing eye and attention into a constant, dizzying zigzag. The whole complicated tale is a metaphor for the author's view of modern Japanese society as an assemblage of incompatible elements and traditions that create psychological civil war in its citizens. If the novel's purpose is grim, its action is lively and the symbolism is provocative.

Shame

by Annie Ernaux,

translated by Tanya Leslie.

Seven Stories, 112 pages, \$16.95.

Ms. Ernaux's memoir begins, "My father tried to kill my mother one Sunday in June," and from that juvenile jolt develops into a cool, factual, ironic study of life in a small town in Normandy in the 1950s. The style is precise, detached, and stripped of all conventional ornament, but the realities of class and money and prejudice in that time and place cut like a razor.

Hildegard of Bingen

by Régine Pernoud,

translated by Paul Duggan.

Marlowe & Company,

224 pages, \$22.95.

Admirers of Hildegard's music will find little about it in this respectful life of the influential abbess who advised princes and plebeians, preached to great effect, and corresponded with Popes, giving one of them what amounted to a dressing down for negligence. The text offers little about music, but provides considerable information on the politics of the

turbulent twelfth century, and on Hildegard's visions. She wrote, or dictated, descriptions of what she saw along with explanations of what it meant. These texts are covered at some length, and they are interesting for what appears to have been an almost surrealistic gap between the visionary's highly fantastic, sharply described images and the lucid, humane religious principles she derived from them. There is no trace of modern skepticism in the author's treatment of Hildegard.

A Home in the Heart of a City

by Kathleen Hirsch.

Farrar, Straus and Giroux/North Point Press, 256 pages, \$24.00.

It may take some patience to reach the merit of Ms. Hirsch's book. She moved to a Boston area called Jamaica Plain, and displays the classic Cantabrigian surprise at discovering the intelligence and efficiency and sensibility of people who never went to Harvard. When she gets to the history and character of Jamaica Plain, she has a good story to report and covers it well. The area was once the equivalent of a prosperous small town, but with the departure of local industries it declined into crime, drug dealing, arson, and empty buildings. Stubborn old residents and energetic newcomers have reversed the decline, some with independent action, some by forming associations and committees, some by learning to influence city hall; and that story is an encouraging example of what cooperation and ingenuity can do to arrest urban decay.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Recent books by Atlantic authors:

Around the House: Reflections on Life Under a Roof by David Owen. Villard, 208 pages, \$21.00. Portions of this book were originally written for *The Atlantic*.

And Both Shall Row by Beth Lordan. St. Martin's Press/Picador, 178 pages, \$21.00. Three of the stories in this collection first appeared in *The Atlantic*.

Fall of the Phantom Lord: Reflections on a Life at Risk by Andrew Todhunter. Doubleday/Anchor, 210 pages, \$23.95. This book grew out of Todhunter's article "The Precipitous World of Dan Osman," in the February, 1996, *Atlantic*.

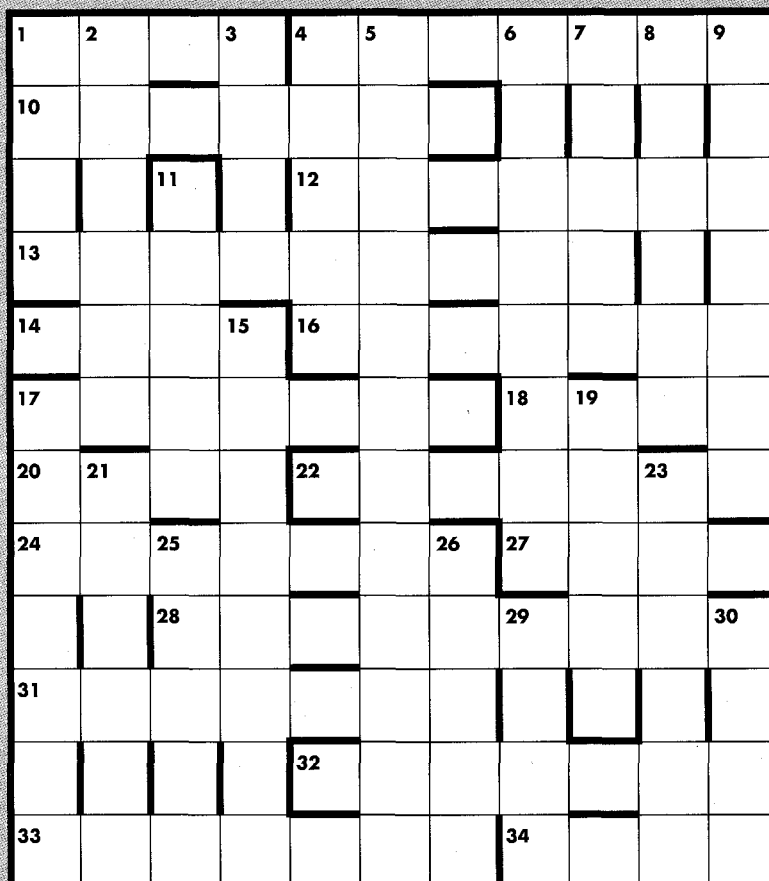


THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Rite of Passage

Some of this puzzle's Across entries take part in 5 Down, a certain ritual; their connection may explain their behavior in the diagram. Lengths for all Across answers are accordingly withheld. Down answers are entered normally. Clue answers include three proper names.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 117.

Across

1. Save first of bandages for cut
4. I shot from behind, plugging house pests and garden pests
10. Arranged truce on defeat
12. In computer, enter savings account and note involving illegal seizure
13. Cart 1,000 beds from the rear holding area
14. Somewhat rude guy's name
16. Routines for quiet moments
17. Strengthen love anew in departure
18. Tip initially included in price for entertainment
20. Perfect place for study in cyberspace?
22. Rages about one's phantoms
24. Various and sundry waterfowl
27. Dog food
28. Disrespectful pun timed poorly

31. Network covering the Spanish and English show-biz luminaries
32. After introduction, happy-looking people meet participants
33. Work of art is unsatisfactory in condition
34. Roll heel over

Down

1. Drop act as a Democrat (4)
2. Add up a group of people in conversation (6)
3. Lift announcer's child (4)
4. Belts and footwear (5)
6. Heartthrob given diamonds mostly showing delight (8)
7. Bath filled by senior in retreat was overfilled (5)

8. A fair land (6)
9. Takes it easy and sits once again (7)
11. Shape verse in mind (5)
15. People inhabiting principle housing unit (8)
17. Tie scores broken by first of decimal figures (7)
19. Emergency room gets the anesthetic (5)
21. Terrible court guide (6)
23. Short pony going around riding course for advanced students (6)
25. Estate is cause of trouble in Virginia (5)
26. Girl's nickname is put back in petition (5)
29. Toy with party lines (4)
30. Check comes in white stationery (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD

IMPROVISATION

by J. E. Lighter

Say What?

"DO you love it," a sassy Bravo journalist cries at the annual Art Car Weekend in Houston, "*or what?*" Weeks later, in Boston, one of National Public Radio's *Car Talk* hosts says, "Hey, Mabel! Can I have some hash with those eggs, *or what?*" In an episode of *The Simpsons* some years ago Homer asked God, "Are we the most pathetic family on the planet, *or what?*" The *or what?* inventory could go on and on, but if you've been following trends in pop rhetoric, you already know what we're dealing with.

There's an old-model *or what?* and a sporty new *or what?* In a diary entry in 1766 the old-model New Englander John Adams asked himself, "In what is this man conspicuous?—in reasoning, in imagination, in painting, in the pathetic [that is, 'sympathetic feeling or expression'], *or what?*" That is the classic *or what?* A snuffy school-master of the time might have taken Adams to task for failing to keep his phrases quite parallel ("You mean, sir, '*or in what?*'!"), but that particular quibble would occur to few of us today. For well over two centuries *or what?* has served the useful purpose in English of eliciting a concrete answer from a wide-open range of unspecified choices. ("Hey, Mabel! Are we having eggs or hash or Danish, *or what?*") The new *or what?* is decidedly more aggressive.

"Is this a great idea, *or what?*" "Was that her best performance ever, *or what?*" These new-school *or what?*s get tacked on to semi-rhetorical yes-or-no questions with the not-very-ulterior motive of commanding total agreement. They're "peremptory *or what?*s," in contrast to "inquisitive *or what?*s"—both terms being ad hoc additions to the vocabulary of micro-semantic description. Any sensible reply to Adams ("Sir, he is conspicuous in his mediocrity") would be broad-



*Investigations of slang
by the editor of the
Random House Historical Dictionary
of American Slang*

ly informative rather than merely affirmative. Peremptory *or what?*s can embellish yes-or-no questions alone. The peremptory "Do you love it, *or what?*" implies that *of course* you love it, and if you don't, you'd better get ready to explain yourself.

Whence came the peremptory *or what?*—from Hawaiian pidgin (as one correspondent suggests)? Yiddish (always a handy hypothesis)? *Or what?* There is no real need to search far afield: English, like every other

living language, often reinvents itself on its own inspiration. Lots of little idioms are generated almost unconsciously. *Y'know? Yeah, right! Sez who? Uh-hunh. Izzat so? And how! Say what? Duh.*

Under just-right conditions even the old-model inquisitive *or what?* can imbue a yes-or-no question with a degree of irony or sarcasm. For example, the nineteenth-century poet Edward FitzGerald, who translated Omar Khayyám's *Rubáiyát* into English, once impatiently inquired of an acquaintance, "Have you supposed me dead *or what?*" Surely that *or what?* effectively plays up the absurdity of any notion that FitzGerald was dead. The current peremptory *or what?* may have battened on this well-established tendency toward irony. (The faded craze for what might be called the accentuated postpositive *not*, repopularized by Mike Myers and *Wayne's World* after decades of dormancy, plays with an even more heavy-handed irony: It's really subtle. *Not!*)

And here's another angle. The peremptory *or what?* most typically features a pause before the *or* and emphatic stress on the *what*. The earliest example I am aware of with the current stress came in a 1964 episode of TV's *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, when a self-assured moron asked Laura Petrie, "You wanna go out Sataday night—*aw what?*" (The laugh track really appreciated this no-nonsense approach.) That cheeky *or what?* presupposes a "yes" and forestalls any other answer, at least in theory—a rhetorical feat pretty much beyond the reach of traditional *or what?* questions. Maybe it occupies a niche in Broca's area of the brain—that is, the speech area—near the one filled by an equally forceful phrase that crept into English in the nineteenth century, and with just as little fanfare: the ever useful *or else!*

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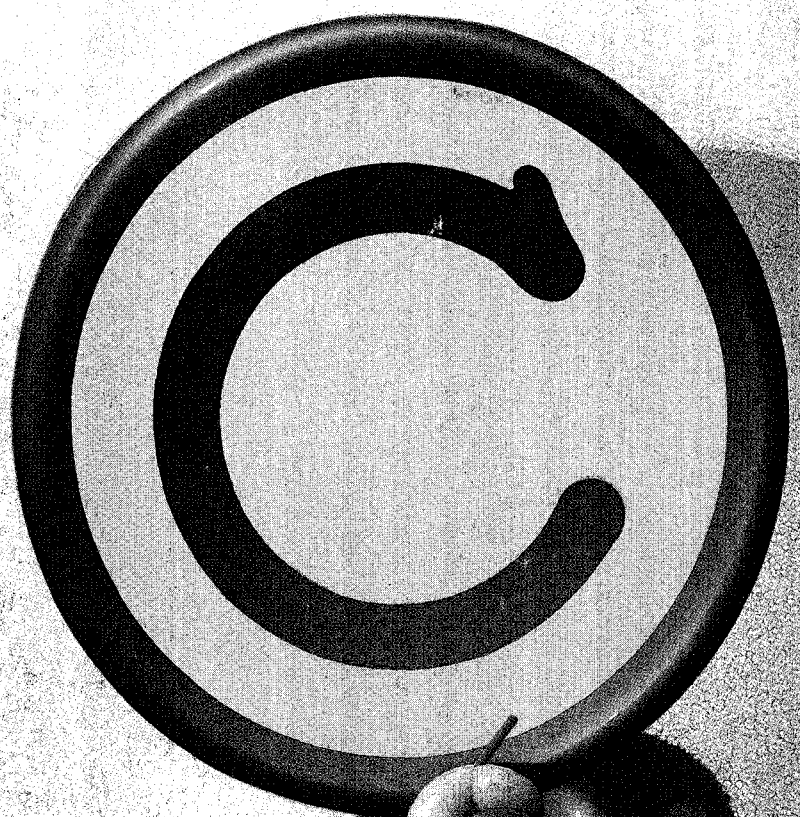
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